

Revival and Revival-Work.

A

RECORD OF THE LABOURS

OF

D. L. MOODY & IRA D. SANKEY,

AND OTHER EVANGELISTS.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE revival of true religion, it is easy to see, will more and more command the attention of the whole Church of Christ. Every such movement proclaims with trumpet voice the supreme importance and unquestionable reality of the agency and power of the Holy Ghost. And I am much mistaken if one good result of the late Awakening be not to stir the deeper heart of Christendom in longings for something more and something better in the sphere of spiritual life and Christian work than has as yet been attained.

In the Narrative of the recent Revival embodied in these pages, a mere republication of such details as have already been given to the public has been as far as possible avoided; while a considerable amount of fresh matter, illustrative of the work of grace, has been introduced. But there is a good deal more than narrative; and I trust the reader will find in the discussion of evangelistic work generally, that the book really answers to its title.

The full history of this Revival can, however, only be written after the present generation has passed away; when the true

outcome of the Awakening will be patent in the widened influence of Evangelical Religion, and its true character, will find illustration in the completed lives of its own children.

If this volume should prove to be of real use to young Christians and Christian workers, I shall consider my labour well rewarded. Above all, if He who wafts the seedling on the wind to its place of destination, should deign to carry some life-germs of saving truth, by means of so poor a vehicle, into the prepared soil of furrowed hearts, it will afford the writer abundant cause of unfeigned thanksgiving to God. With the grace of His unbounded condescension in view, I cast my bread upon the waters.

DUNDEE.



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REVIVAL AND REVIVAL WORK.

CHAPTER I.

REVIVAL.

JESUS of Nazareth has been passing by. In the preaching of His Word, and in the gracious workings of His Spirit He is always passing by. In the stately goings of His providence and in the lives of His saints the majestic steps of our Lord may be always traced. But the ears of men are dull, and they hear not the goings of God in the sanctuary. It is when He goeth without, when the voice of wisdom is heard in the streets, that the world's ear is awakened. When the marvels of His grace are wrought, when the deaf hear, the blind receive their sight, the lepers are cleansed, and the dead are raised, the generation of slumberers is startled into consciousness of the fact, that the Son of God is among them. Then, palpably, the Saviour is passing by.

Beyond all question, He who "walketh amidst the seven golden candlesticks", has been moving graciously among the churches. The King of glory, to whom our country has once and again solemnly sworn allegiance, not without the loyal tribute of her children's blood—

"The King of all kingdoms for ever is He,
And He holdeth our crowns in His hands"—

has been marching in triumph through the land. With bountiful hand He has been scattering blessings on every soul. Where darkness reigned the Sun of Righteousness has arisen. Unbelief has been cast out by faith. Error, sin, selfishness have been dispossessed by truth, holiness, and love. Where despondency had borne sway, hope is now springing. Doubt and fear have given place to a childlike confidence in the Father, and the sense of a Saviour's love. By the quickening breath of the Spirit many a "desert" soul has been made glad and many a "wilderness" home has begun to "blossom as the rose." Ministers of the gospel, who had been "weeping between the porch and the altar," have entered on a joyful pastoral experience. Faithful workers in every part of the field have been reaping an abundant harvest. Over all the land the call of Israel's sweet singer has been responded to: "Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: let them praise the name of the Lord: for His name alone is excellent; His glory is above the earth and heaven." At this we need not wonder since it is permitted us to believe that the freshly-dawning light in many a heart is the first golden streak of an eternal day; that the newly-awakened pulse of spiritual joy is the incipient throb of an everlasting life.

Revival is a word with which the ears of the present generation are familiar. We hear of revival in the fine arts, in science, in literature, in commerce and trade. If among the rest we hear of a revival of religion we surely need not marvel.

What is the news? The money-market is brisk: there is a revival on 'Change. The tidings are full of music to a thousand ears: many hearts beat responsive with hope.

The time of Nature's annual awakening has come round the earth puts on her dress of emerald green, the forest bursts into a new creation, myriads of germs that slept in the dust awake in glorious resurrection, and a renewed world rejoices in the smiles of heaven. Here is a revival beautiful above all and

It is a revival more enriching than commerce, and more replete with wisdom than science. It is a revival of letters, whose printing-presses are the blooming garden and the furrowed field, whose lessons teem in every flower, and whose teachings are published on every leaf of the forest. And yet that fair revival, material and fleeting as it is, carries in it infinitely less glory and meaning than the awakening of one soul to God, the recovery of one man from sin, and the touching of one human spirit to the fine issues of holiness and everlasting life.

A child returns from his class, and says, "Mother, I have got the new heart from Jesus to-day." The mother listens to her boy's song, "Jesus loves even me," and marking the sweetness and wisdom of his new ways, remembers the words, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise." A young woman has just laid the bloom of her youth on the altar of her God, a reasonable and happy service. A broken heart, long familiar with the bitterest of griefs, a sense of unforgiven sin, has found healing at the foot of the cross, and is breaking out in songs of praise. A newly-enlisted soldier of Jesus Christ, having counted the cost, is buckling on the whole armour of God, resolved to suffer rather than sin, to die rather than draw back. A sinner, bankrupt in all the moralities, having obtained mercy, is vowing in the strength of God, henceforth to crown Christ and crucify self, to wed purity and wage eternal war with sin. A Christian emerging from a painful struggle with unbelief and worldliness into closer fellowship and more full assurance, sings the truest song of gratitude by going forth into the dark and noisome places of the city to comfort the Lord's hidden ones, and search for the lost. A minister of the gospel has newly discovered the great secret of success, and is determined to discern himself about the end rather than the means, the salvation of his hearers rather than the preaching of his sermons, the winning of men's souls not the winning of their favour, and, the Lord helping him, to consecrate his energies to the glory of

God in the salvation of men. Let these instances be multiplied an hundred-fold, and you will have the signs and fruits of a revival such as we have seen once and again within the last twenty years.

What, it may be asked, is the function of revival in the economy of grace? It is, if we read Scripture and history aright, to supply the Church of Christ with those more powerful impulses of faith and zeal, by which, her strength being renewed, she is stimulated to mightier and more successful efforts in working out her great mission, the evangelization of the world. The revival of the Church invariably leads, more or less, to the conversion of sinners. At such a time there is an overflow of grace. Then the living Church throws herself out upon the world with unwon'ted energy and success. This holds true of the individual Christian also. The special grace of revival is not merely for his own use; far more it is for the good of others.

The course of the Christian heavenward, some one has said, is a series of impulses. Between the impulses, however, there is the measured and normal movement of habit. The fresh impulse or extraordinary effort, and the well-regulated step of habitual or ordinary exertion, alike harmonise with and result from the laws which limit and govern all human activity. The laws of impulse and habit are, in fact, the grooves in which the grace of God, working mightily in the hearts of His children, ever runs. Whether in a fresh spiritual impulse or in gracious habit, the prime mover and worker is the Holy Spirit. The experience of Christians is as varied as the features of the human face, or the leaves of the forest. Yet amidst endless shades of character and phases of experience, the progress of Christians is invariably characterised by the alternations of new impulse and settled habit; in other words, the *fresh start* and the *steady pull*. The fresh start is revival; the steady pull is its outcome. Each phase has its peculiar danger as well as its special advantage. The period of profound emotion and unusual energy may be

followed by reaction. The steady pull of habit is apt to degenerate into lifeless form, or heartless routine. Each is the complement of the other. The remedy for the peculiar evils arising from the extraordinary impulses of revival is the well-regulated and constantly sustained movement of gracious habit. The remedy for such evils as may arise from the ordinary round of religious life is the stirring impulses of a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. The steady pull utilises and reduces to measure and evenness the vehement forces of the fresh start. The new and special energies of revival lift habit out of the dull monotony naturally tending to decay. The new affection gives wing to principle; while principle in turn conserves and regulates the affection. Without the impetus of a holy violence, very frequently the steady-going habit of the Christian walk could not be formed at all. On the other hand, without the formation of habit the most powerful impulses would be wholly lost, or would result in evil.

This double force, the fresh start and the steady pull, wears the aspect of a universal law. At all events, we find illustration of it everywhere. The river leaps impulsively from its mountain birthplace to pursue the even tenor of its way amidst the peaceful meadows. The bird springs from the ground with an almost supernatural effort, and then, as if conscious of having escaped the deadly snare beneath, moves along the air on easy, graceful wing. The horse bends all his energies to climb the hill, and on reaching the higher level falls into his ordinary pace. On the harvest-field the farmer is full of bustle and heat; by and by he paces the wintry furrow with slow and measured step. The merchant's life alternates from the stirring market-day to the quiet intervals and lull of business.

So also it is in Christian life. The outbursting impulses of revival alternate with quieter but not inactive seasons. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be

weary ; they shall walk, and not faint." The twofold effect of that renewal of strength is the sudden, upward, eagle-like flight of faith and the patient race or plodding walk of cheerful obedience. For real progress both are needed,—the fresh start of an enthusiastic faith not less and not more than the steady pull of earnest, plodding service. Without the powerful impulses of spiritual renewal, the life of the Christian would soon become no better than the lazy swing of the door upon its hinges, or the monotonous round of the treadmill. On the other hand, the perpetual toil of blind or baffled impulse were no better than the dashing of the untamed bird against the bar of its cage, or the ceaseless breaking of the fruitless waves upon the shore.

The individual Christian needs constant periodical revivings. In secret prayer from day to day he rekindles his fire at the altar of God. On the Lord's-day he finds a sevenfold refreshing—a weekly revival. But there are times when the believer's needs are increased an hundredfold, and the intensified sense of need inspires his prayers with a crying urgency, a boldness of importunity, a persistency of appeal, the result of which is blessing an hundredfold. Thus often it is that eminence in grace and in service is attained. And perhaps oftener still it is that in seasons of revival, when spring-tides of blessing run high and the gales of the Spirit blow with unwonted freshness, many Christians of the feebler sort are borne along to shores of high communion with God and joy in the Holy Ghost. The combined force of a myriad prayers in one, the intensified ardour of a great spiritual awakening, enable the believer to reach a height that alone and isolated he could never attain. So it was at that great convention for prayer when the young Church at Jerusalem received a second baptism of the Holy Ghost, and "great grace was upon them all."

The life of the believer, and the history of the Church, are closely analogous. The Christian is the Church in miniature ; the

Church is the Christian multiplied. The movements of a river, it is said, may be seen in a trickling drop; the history of a tree may be read in a single leaf. The progress of the Church, like that of the individual believer, is a series of impulses with the steady pull between. Like Israel in the wilderness, the "sacramental host" of the Church militant is advancing to the promised land of millennial rest by a series of alternate marchings and campings. There is not a single branch of the Church of God deserving of mention on the page of history that was not launched into existence on the tide of a great awakening, or borne upon the high seas of spiritual prosperity by the freshening gales of revival.

The deep shades of apostacy, by which the career of the Old Testament Church is wrapt in so melancholy a gloom, is frequently lit up and relieved by the gracious return of the Holy Spirit and the revival of religion. Very remarkable was the awakening at Bochim, through the instrumentality of an angel, whose plain speaking went straight to the people's heart, and the vast assemblage burst into tears. Not less striking was the work of grace under Samuel, when the revival culminated in a great open-air meeting at Mizpeh, the whole multitude putting in a request for prayer, and receiving such answer and blessing as led to the memorial, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." At Elijah's great revival prayer-meeting on Mount Carmel, the bold prophet staked the work of reformation on an answer to prayer, and his gigantic labours reached a successful climax when the fire descended upon his sacrifice, and the people, convinced and repentant, fell upon their faces, crying, "The Lord, He is the God! The Lord, He is the God!" Equally interesting was the awakening in the days of Hezekiah, which, like other movements of a similar character, took place suddenly; for "God had prepared the people." The revival culminated in a great convention at Jerusalem, when the passover was held in the second month—a bold step, since it was "out of season"—and a series

of special meetings was held for two successive weeks amidst the joy of answered prayer and spiritual blessing. One of the most remarkable revivals of religion recorded in the Old Testament took place in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra, when those good men, taking advantage of the rising tide of inquiry and repentance, held all-day meetings, whose hours were occupied with Bible-reading, free conversation, prayer, confession of sin, and praise, there being, as the historian tells, "very great gladness." Wonderful, truly, was the awakening at Nineveh when the voice of the foreign street-preacher carried conviction and penitence into the hearts of all, from the king to the beggar!

The Prophet Habakkuk, in the most sublime imagery of nature, describes a revival in his time. Thus he prayed: "O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years; in the midst of the years make known: in wrath remember mercy." How long he prayed we know not; but this we do know, the answer came. How came the answer? God came. This is ever the answer of prayer, this is always true revival: *God comes*. His comings and His goings are the great secret of spiritual experience, a secret the formalist knows no more of than the blind know of the comings and goings of lights and shadows among the forest trees. The majesty, holiness, and grace of God are here set forth by the prophet in imagery of matchless beauty and force. Pestilence and lightning are His heralds. He stands and measures the earth, as the husbandman paces his field before he ploughs it. Nature is conscious of her Maker's presence, and bows low. The everlasting mountains are scattered; the perpetual hills make obeisance. The tents of Cushan are in affliction; the curtains of the land of Midian in trouble. The world's resting-places are quaking; the refuges of lies are exposed. The rivers overflow; the deep utters his voice and lifts his hands in the mighty billows that toss man's works like playthings, and shatter all his pride. Judgment overtakes impenitent sinners. Whenever the Lord comes to His temple, even when He comes in

mercy, His fan is in His hand. There never was a revival without the most awful of judgments, the hardening of hearts, the searing of consciences, the last knock of warning, the sealing of incorrigible sinners in reprobation, when souls, trampling on the blood of Christ, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace, are finally left of God. "Thou wentest forth for the salvation of Thy people." This salvation, no doubt, was accomplished. Like the other prophets, Habakkuk here illustrates a common experience by describing his own. That experience was in the highest degree spiritual, as his words show. The effect of this glorious manifestation of God on the prophet was twofold, humbling him and lifting him up. First, he is penetrated with a sense of personal unworthiness, and overwhelmed with apprehensions of judgment to come. Like Isaiah, a glimpse of the Holy One of Israel, the Saviour, lays him in the dust, and he cries out, "Woe is me, I am undone!" No soul of man shall ever appear in that holy place, into which nothing that defileth shall enter, without tasting the mortal bitterness of sin. To some this wholesome though dreadful knowledge is given before conversion: to others it comes afterwards.

From that deep abasement of soul the prophet is raised to the highest joy and most triumphant faith, which he describes in glowing terms: "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds' feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places." To the prophet's eye the world sinks into its native insignificance; to him the last flicker of its vain glory goes clean out. Drought and famine and pestilence may rob the vineyard and the farm of all their wealth; time may fill up its bitterest cup to the brim; but his spirit has waxed independent of every-

thing on earth. God is his portion, and the loss of earthly pleasures will only enhance his joy in the Lord. Falling through all his props he alights in the soft lap of divine blessedness. Standing in the full light of God's face, riches, honour, pleasure, sorrow, sin, death, and every evil of earth or time, lie far beneath. This is the full assurance of faith with its piercing, purged vision. This is the high place of full surrender. This is the Pisgah height of hope, the Beulah land of peace and tranquil rest, the mount of transfiguration, with its joy unspeakable and full of glory. This is revival in its choicest outcome of spiritual experience. In the rich blessing of this revival his fellow-saints no doubt had a share; for God had gone forth for "the salvation of His people." Even temporal salvation for Israel was always associated with spiritual blessing. Throughout their history national and spiritual revival went hand in hand. And we cannot believe that such a full tide of grace would not overflow in blessing on a perishing world.

In the New Testament times the Church has ever been kept alive by renewed baptism of the Holy Ghost. There is scarce a bright page in her history, whether of suffering or work, that is not adorned with the illuminated characters of spiritual revival. It is marvellous how soon a living church becomes utterly dead. The innate tendency to decay is vastly increased by the deadly miasma of the world's atmosphere without. Moreover, on an average, every fifteen years, keeping the period of childhood out of count, a generation of saints pass into the fellowship of the church of the first-born in heaven. Without a continuous work of grace lasting all the year round, or else a wide-spread awakening of Pentecostal proportions, clearly enough the most lively church will soon die. A quiet, constant work of the Holy Spirit from week to week, resulting not more in the upbuilding of saints than in the conversion of sinners, is much to be desired, and will, as a rule, be enjoyed by faithful pastors and living churches. Meanwhile, however, the world

without is perishing; and it is only in a time of general awakening that men, steeped in worldliness and religious indifference, are converted in large numbers. A revival, with its crowded assemblies, its daily meetings, its heaven-piercing supplications, its hushed expectancy, its startling incidents, its striking conversions, its joyous songs, falls upon the men of the world like a thunderbolt in a clear sky. They are arrested, aroused, and compelled to come in. It is in such seasons that the Church is boldest and most aggressive; then it is, too, that she spoils the enemy of his deadliest weapons, beating hostile swords into friendly reaping-hooks.

Does the minister complain that the Church's heart has lapsed into such decay that the most pointed warning; the most impassioned appeal, is as a nail driven home into rotten timber, making bad worse, and yielding the workman only a cloud of dust for his pains? Let there be a work of genuine revival in the congregation, and then even feeble words will tell, and every sermon will be as a nail fixed in a sure place. Is the Church in want of men, not mere men of books, but men of God, to minister the word? Is there a loud call for help from the foreign-mission field? Let the Spirit breathe on the dry bones, and suddenly a host of volunteers, grasping the old white banner with the red cross, are seen pressing to the front. Are brave and tender hearts wanted to go out into the streets and lanes, up into dingy garrets, and down into gloomy cellars, to make acquaintance with drunkards, harlots, and thieves, and to carry the gospel into dark places where no ray of truth can enter save through minds besotted with every vice? Into those haunts where intellect is the slave of fiendish passion, and hearts are steeled against the cry of nature; where hunger, nakedness, and sorrow, are the nurses of childhood; and sensuality, remorse, and despair, are the companions of age,—who has courage, and hope, and heart enough to venture? It is a well-known fact that those churches, and almost those only,

that are identified with a pure, warm, revival evangelism, furnish the necessary contingents of brave, gentle hearts for this the Church's forlorn hope and martyr-like service.

If asked to describe the characteristics of a genuine revival, I should name the following :

1. An uncommon eagerness to hear the Word of God, and an unwonted readiness to speak and be spoken to about the interests of the soul.
2. An unusual sense of sin and personal unworthiness, together with a readiness to unite in prayer for pardon and holiness.
3. A singularly cordial appreciation of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and a joyful acceptance of the personal Saviour.
4. Personal consecration and covenanting with God in the Spirit of grace, accompanied by reformation of life and manners.
5. Great delight in secret and social prayer, and in all the ordinances of God.
6. An uncommon sense of the nearness of God, with joy in the Holy Ghost, and abounding thanksgiving and praise.
7. Increased fervour of love and deepened sense of unity among Christians.
8. An extraordinary concern for the salvation of others, and boldness in testifying to the grace of God in His Son.



CHAPTER II.

A GLANCE AT FORMER REVIVALS.

ALL spiritual revival is essentially the same. As the seed sown is of the same kind, the ripened grain must correspond. Modes of Christian profession, and methods of Christian work, may differ in different ages, or among different races; but the work of the Spirit in the hearts and lives of men is in substance the same always and everywhere. There is especially a close kinship and resemblance in the spiritual awakenings of the same people. They seem to be visible portions of the same great stream—fuller tides of one great sea.

Scotland has been pre-eminently a land of revivals. If there is any connection between the history of a church and her spiritual life, then assuredly the records of Scottish Christianity cast no reflection on its evangelism; for, if we read the story aright, revival is inscribed in the brightest characters on our country's past, splendidly lighted up as that past is by martyr-piles and deeds of renown. The Reformation in Scotland sprang from a great spiritual awakening. The work of Knox and his compeers was nothing if it was not a revival of religion. The Spirit of God breathed on the dry bones, and from the dust there sprang a living host. God spake, and it was done. In England the work was done largely to royal order. The king spoke, and the work was done only as far as a king can do a thing of the kind. Here, in the north, men "born again," seeing "the kingdom of God" in a light in which crowned

hands and courtly prelates rarely see it, forthwith proceeded to establish that kingdom in the land. Hence the old snake, Popery, only scotched, is growing so vigorous in the England of our day. Scotland then owes everything to a great evangelistic movement.

In the seventeenth century the work was scarcely less important or fruitful than in the days of Knox. The famous awakening at Shotts, on the 21st of June, 1630, when upwards of five hundred persons were converted under a sermon of John Livingstone's, is one of those events which Divine Providence seems to employ for the purpose of planting a great thought in the breast of a nation. Apart altogether from its immediate results, the fact of the Shotts revival appears to have filled the mind of the Scottish people with awe, and to have fixed deep in their heart *belief in sudden conversion on a widely extended scale*. Ever since that event the thought has been germinating in a thousand prayers for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. Truly the Shotts incident has been pregnant of good; for in the times of a blighting formalism the memory of it served to keep alive faith in the Holy Spirit, and the hope of revival.

The intrepid Henderson and the saintly Rutherford raised the old banner of the true evangel in a wide-spread awakening of pure and undefiled religion. The great gatherings, the free assemblies, the enthusiasm of the covenant signing, were the natural outcome of renewed spiritual life. Stripped of its political accidents and ecclesiastical aspects, the movement of that period in nowise differed from the revivals of our times. The Church needed to drink deep of the well of life before setting her face to the Hill Difficulty which took her twenty-eight long years of love and bloody toil to climb. Donald Cargill, Richard Cameron, and Alexander Peden, were evangelists as well as patriots; and to their faithful contendings, under God, the cause of vital godliness not less than the cause of civil and religious liberty owes a debt of everlasting gratitude.

It would not be easy to overestimate the effect on the religion of our day of the evangelistic labours of Wesley and Whitefield. In the churches of Great Britain and Ireland a certain well-defined evangelical strain is distinctly traceable to the widespread influence with which their stupendous efforts were baptized from heaven. In Scotland, in particular, the warm throb of that matchless fervour with which George Whitefield proclaimed the doctrines of grace is felt to this day. To the great awakening in which Wesley and Whitefield were the leaders may be clearly traced our modern missions, both home and foreign.

The generation who heard the thunders of the great English evangelist had not entirely passed away when two stalwart laymen arose, who, catching up the dying echoes of Whitefield's voice, trumpeted forth the same glorious gospel of the grace of God throughout the land. The gigantic and successful labours of the noble and patriotic brothers, Robert and James Haldane, furnish a bright chapter to the history of evangelical religion at a time when our Scottish Christianity was bedizened by the false culture and befooled by the hollow formalities of Moderatism. In Lowland city and in Highland glen the revival that took place under these heroic servants of Jesus Christ has left many precious fruits. Nor should we forget that grand and true evangelist, Rowland Hill, whose labours in Scotland, as well as in England, have left ineffaceable marks behind.

For the revival of religion "pure and undefiled," for the establishment and success of missions at home and abroad, the nineteenth century must be regarded as one of the brightest in the history of Christianity. So far it has been a century of religious awakening in Scotland. Each successive wave has swept further up over the dry ground; each great movement has been characterized by its own distinctive Christian features, and each has left its own spiritual tide-mark. The first quarter

of the century was marked by the appearance of two striking figures on the field of ecclesiastical warfare and evangelistic service. In the whole range of Scottish Church history it would be hard to discover two more stalwart champions of the gospel, two more genuine sons of thunder, than Andrew Thomson and Thomas Chalmers. Their thunder was genuine; its effects were beneficent. The showers which fell from heaven, ere the reverberations of their mighty voices had died away, have made our country green.

Dr. Andrew Thomson, whose brief but brilliant career so suddenly closed on the 9th February, 1831, just as the Church's eventful ten years' conflict was beginning, was not only an ecclesiastical reformer, but also a minister of the true evangelism. He laid his axe at the root of the tree. His work was the work of genuine and fruitful revival. In his time society in the Scottish metropolis was either wallowing in the mire of shameless dissipation, or tossing on the winds of the most hollow vanity. It is told of the intrepid minister of St. George's, that he had occasion one Saturday night at a very late hour to visit an afflicted member of his flock. On his way home, when it was little short of the midnight hour, his eye chanced to light on a house whose windows were brilliant with the glare of festivity. The house was occupied by a family of some note in the congregation, from whom better things than a Saturday-night revel might have been expected. The minister paused. He could see the shadows of the dancers on the window blinds of the lighted drawing-room; he could hear the sounds of the music, and the voices of revelry. He paused but a moment. Taking his resolution, he stepped up the doorway and rang the bell. Without speaking a word to the servant who opened the door, he took his way upstairs, and ere ever any one was entered the room, and stood right up in the midst of the dancers. Had a spirit from the other world appeared there, he could not have been thrown into a state of greater embarrass-

and confusion. The music ceased; the dancers stood still; a silence awful as death followed, whilst the bold intruder surveyed the company with a stern glance. Not a word did he utter; not one tongue was moved to ask, "What doest thou?" As the penetrating glance of reproof fell in turn on each one of the confounded revellers, every countenance fell, and the bravest quailed. The piercing eye and solemn presence having accomplished the work of admonition, the minister retired amidst the same unbroken silence. It was a bold stroke. Few men could do it; fewer still perhaps could afford to try to do it. Only such men as carry the standard of the cross into markets and fairs, into slums and sinks of iniquity, and plant it on the very citadel of Satan, can perform feats of that kind. This was the true evangelistic spirit, the wise, holy daring of a faithful soldier of Jesus Christ. And the blessing of God rested on the deed. Not only in that family, but in many other families of the congregation, and in Edinburgh society generally, a work of reformation began, and was carried forward with great success. The ball-room and the theatre were forsaken. Many individuals and families in the upper circles exchanged the frivolities of fashionable life for the sober pleasures of religion; family worship and godly living, with their peaceful train of blessings, took the place of worldliness and sin.

To no one man more than to Thomas Chalmers is due the progress of a sound and healthy evangelism in the land. How pregnant with results was the change that came over that powerful mind, and gave to that great heart its Godward impulse! es, during to the days of his "ignorance and pride," when, as a minister, he maintained that a minister of the gospel might with regard to the spiritual and eternal interests of his flock neglect five days of the week in the study of mathematics or any other science, he gives expression to the following remarkable statement: "Strangely blinded that I was! What, sir, is the and of mathematical science? Magnitude and the proportions

of magnitude. But *then*, sir, I had forgotten *two magnitudes*: I thought not of the littleness of time; I recklessly thought not of the greatness of eternity!" The conversion of Chalmers was an epoch in the history of Scottish Christianity. It was a beacon-fire kindled on a high place, whose blaze was the signal for the lighting of a thousand lesser fires. Chalmers was an evangelist, a preacher of the old gospel, a restorer of ancient paths, a reviver of dead and dying churches. He preached, and taught a multitude of earnest men to preach, the full, glorious meaning of the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God; for only in the cross of Christ as sin-bearer had he found rest for his own soul. He proclaimed, and moved a host of other preachers to proclaim, the nature and necessity of regeneration by the Holy Ghost; for he had found that although he could be a scholar, a preacher, a man of science, a philosopher, by the unaided efforts of reason and the culture of the natural man, without the renewing grace of the Spirit of God, he could neither enter the kingdom of heaven himself, nor rightly guide others in search of the strait gate. With all his breadth and loftiness and power *the spiritual* rose to ascendancy in Chalmers. Everywhere and always he proclaimed the gospel in its simplicity, and was never ashamed to maintain that the "man of prayer is a man of power." And these truths—the efficacy of the blood of Christ, the supernatural origin and spiritual character of the second birth, and the real power of prayer—he advocated none the less earnestly that they were extremely obnoxious to the formalism of the time.

The fruits of his labours in the revival of evangelical religion are to be seen in every city, town, and parish in the kingdom. In a future age, when the lustre of his magnificent intellect and the aurora-like lights of his splendid imagination shall shine with the diminished radiance of a remote past, when the echoes of his ecclesiastical fame shall have grown faint with the lapse of many generations of men, the memory of that truly noble

spirit will be encircled with this undying glory—that he lived and laboured for the salvation of sinners. For after all, even in this corrupt world, no renown will live so long or wear so well as the purely spiritual; and in the long run, no light of the past will shine so conspicuous as that which lighted the path of the Church in her onward march to the promised land of millennial rest. The fruit of the labours of Thomas Chalmers has been the turning of many to righteousness. He did not merely light so many lamps with his own hand: his was the gift, his the calling, to train men skilfully in the divine art of lighting gospel lamps in the bosoms and homes of benighted men. Catching the fervour of his own enthusiasm, many ever since his day have run to and fro bearing the torch of a pure and warm evangel into the very region and shadow of death, insomuch that the darkness of a rationalistic moderatism has been remarkably diminished. In short, it is easy enough to trace a clear connection between more recent revivals and the labours of one who has been justly described as the greatest home missionary Scotland has ever seen.

The evangelical awakening under Thomson and Chalmers gave birth to another revival of a very striking character. I refer to the remarkable work of grace of which the saintly McCheyne and the apostolic Burns were the representatives. The first striking indications of this movement took place, as every one knows, under the preaching of the latter at Kilsyth and Dundee in 1839. Many of those converted at that time have, after a life of holy, consistent service, been removed to the house of many mansions; whilst others, who can tell the day when and point to the spot where the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ first dawned on them, live to adorn the gospel by a profession and a character as pure, and honourable, and useful as may be found on earth. I can scarcely look around me in this city of Dundee, or walk its streets, without seeing in living embodiment or other palpable

form the genuine and well-tested fruits of that revival. Many of the converts of the Burns and McCheyne period are worthy office-bearers in the churches. Of the converts in St. Peter's alone,* some sixteen became ministers of the gospel at home and abroad, some of whom are now the spiritual fathers of hundreds. In short, if we may judge men by their fruits, and if the fruit of the Spirit ever appears in the lives of men, the revival of that period was a great work of the Holy Ghost. Those professing Christians who cannot, like Barnabas, "see the grace of God," or who refuse to receive the testimony of wise and holy men to the origin of the hope that has inspired their lips with "every good word," and ennobled their lives with "every good work," are surely in danger of falling, if they have not already fallen, under the sinister influences of religious bigotry, or the melancholy hallucinations of spiritual pride.

It has frequently been remarked, that a single word spoken by an eminently holy man has been the means of awakening, or of converting, a sinner. It has also been observed that a similar result has followed the simple utterances of an ordinary Christian worker, during seasons of revival. The explanation probably is, that the instrument thus honoured is in an unusual degree under the gracious control of the Holy Spirit. However that may be; the commonest sayings of Robert McCheyne were singularly felicitous and effective. The words dropped in passing were doubtless given him by the Master; for in many instances they became memorable for ever. One day as he passed along the street he laid his hand upon the head of a child, who, at the kind touch, looked up into the calm, solemn countenance of the minister. "Walter," said McCheyne, "do you love your soul?" Without another word he passed on. The little fellow wondered much at the strange question; often and deeply did he ponder it, at the same time recalling, in the hushed hours of night, the ecstatic tone and seraph-like visage of the

* McCheyne's church,

godly pastor. The word spoken became a thought in the boy's heart; the thought became through grace a living germ. Walter became a Christian, a student, and a minister. His course was not lengthened; but it was full of hearty and successful toil in the Master's cause, and was crowned with the true success—the winning of many souls. This little narration I received from his own lips. Who that knew the late devoted Walter Davidson, minister of Knox Free Church, Perth, will not readily admit that he had truly learned to love his own soul and the souls of others with a holy, consuming love, and had inherited no small portion of the spirit of McCheyne?

A similar incident in the life of William Burns I have heard related by one of his intimate friends. When Burns was preaching in the Perthshire Highlands, a young man, full of gaiety and love of the world, told his companions that he was going to hear the great revival preacher. "Take care," said they to him, "lest ye get converted." "No fear of that," was the reply. "To show you when I come home that I am not converted, I will play the bagpipes and dance —," naming a certain Highland dance. He went. The people were assembled in the parish kirkyard, or burial-place, and the preacher standing on a tombstone proclaimed the unsearchable riches of Christ. The young man, resolved not to come under the influence that was said to attend the preaching of Burns, took his stand at the farthest verge of the crowd, and leaning on one of the pillars of the gate, listened with very little interest to the discourse. That day the words of the evangelist were measured and slow, and his spirit was calm. There is nothing in that preaching, said the young man to himself. Suddenly the speaker paused, and departing apparently from the line of his address, he raised his

voice from heaven. At the same moment he thought the eye of the preacher lighted on him with a piercing glance. He trembled, feeling as if the stone pillar on which he leaned was giving way. Had one of the graves opened and the dead arisen to confront him he could scarcely have been more startled, or more deeply impressed with a sense of something awful, invisible, and divine. It was the sword of the Spirit wielded in the power of the Spirit. When he went home that night there was no music, and no dance. Neither the gibes nor the enticing words of his companions moved him. He sought the Lord, and found Him. Afterwards he became a student and a preacher, and ultimately settled as a pastor in Canada. To the character of the revival under Burns and McCheyne testimony was borne by Dr. Macdonald, "the Apostle of the North," whose own labours as an evangelist have borne so much fruit in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

Twenty years more pass away, and again the Spirit of God breathes on the dry bones. The great awakening in America, and the no less remarkable work in the North of Ireland, were followed by the revival in Scotland of 1859-60. The work of 1839, and subsequent religious movements, prepared the way for this more extensive, if not more remarkable, awakening. There was a voice of more earnest prayer, a hum of more lively Christian activity in the Churches; a loftier aim and a more spiritual tone had been developed; pastors and people were prepared to throw themselves with more intelligence and sympathy into a movement of this nature. But yet many ministers, elders, and other professing Christians looked askance at revival. It may have been to rouse the unfaithful Church to jealousy that the awakening of 1859-60 was characterised by the extraordinary number of eminent laymen whom God raised up to carry on His work. Be that as it may, this period was marked by the appearing in the field of a host of powerful lay-

preachers. Apart from the labours of an earnest and faithful pastorate, the services of the most devoted lay-workers would be of little value. In preparing the way for revival, in carrying it forward in safe channels, and in gathering up its fruits, the services of ministers or pastors are of paramount importance. Yet it does seem as if the Divine Head and King of the Church deemed it meet now and again to assert in some striking and practical way His own sovereignty in the furtherance of His cause, and the salvation of men. As He raised the fishermen and others of old, did He not call into special service these laymen, men of every grade and type of character—a man of the world like Brownlow North, a lawyer like Reginald Radcliffe, a lord of the soil like Hay M. Grant, of Arndilly, a stone-hewer like Duncan Matheson, a fish-curer like James Turner, a runaway soldier like Robert Annan, and a prize-fighting butcher like Robert Cunningham? In calling these men and such as they to the high places of the field, was it not to illustrate the power and riches of His grace—to teach the Church to lean on no arm but the Lord's, and to expect no blessing but in the Holy Ghost? All this is confounding to Greek wisdom and Pharisaic pride; but the lowly disciple will say with the Master, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight."

With tremendous earnestness and force Brownlow North proclaimed in those days the most awful and glorious of all fundamental truths—God Is. With singular tenderness and persuasive power, Reginald Radcliffe preached "God is love." Hay M. Grant of Arndilly, with uncommon clearness, set forth *salvation as a gift*. Duncan Matheson thundered out death, judgment, and eternity; never forgetting, however, the great doctrines of grace. James Turner, of Peterhead, reiterated with consuming fervour and never-wearying frequency, the Saviour's announcement to

Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." While such men as Robert Annan and Robert Cunningham gave testimony to the grace of God from their own experience stand-point, saying with the psalmist, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." Besides these, many other eminent laymen, most of them, happily, still with the Church on earth, took an earnest part in the work. In short, although the movement was instrumentally led and sustained by an indefatigable band of ministers of various denominations, the work might have been termed the Laymen's Revival. In this way it seemed as if the Master was calling every Christian to take his own place and work in the service of the gospel.

Of the eminent Christian workers named, only two; viz., Mr. North and Mr. Radcliffe, are still numbered with the Church militant, the others having joined the general assembly of the Church on high. To their memory I would here offer a passing tribute.

James Turner occupies a distinguished niche in the temple of local church history in the North-east of Scotland. Born at Peterhead in 1818, and born again in 1840, he lived a quiet life until the great revival of 1859-60 brought him out of obscurity. For some time previous to that era his soul yearned with an intense desire to win souls. In the midst of his business as a fish-curer, he would often say he believed the Lord had something in store for him better than "making barrels." Fortunes are sometimes made by the herring-curiers of the North-east coast, but the glitter of gold dazzled James Turner's eye less than the gleam of the bright recompense of souls won for Christ. His prayers were at length answered; his longings for Christian usefulness were fully gratified. From coopering and barrel-making, from waiting at early morn for the return of the fishing-boat from sea, from steeping the fresh herrings in the brine, he passed to be a fisher of men.

Often had he desired to promote the spiritual welfare of the fishing population in the North-eastern provinces, his business having brought him into frequent contact with them, and excited in his breast a special interest on their behalf. In 1859, leaving his business in the hands of his brother, who approved of his proposed evangelistic tour, and having solemnly committed himself to God, he set forth in apostolic fashion to preach Christ wherever a door might be providentially opened. On the 6th December, 1859, he addressed his first meeting at St. Combes, a little fishing village some twelve miles west of Peterhead. Here "much interest" was manifested, and on the following day he went from house to house speaking to all individually of the concerns of the soul. From St. Combes he passed on to Charlestown, Inverallochy, and Cairnbulg. Prosecuting his mission along the coast, he visited Fraserburgh, Pitullie, and Rosehearty. Afterwards he extended his labours to the towns and villages of the Banffshire coast, in the course of time widening his circuit so far as to embrace Inverness on the one hand and Aberdeen on the other. Rural parishes and towns were also visited. Everywhere his meetings were crowded, signs of blessing followed, and the enthusiastic fishermen hailed him as an apostle.

Remarkable scenes were often witnessed. These rude children of the sea, knowing nothing of conventional rules and subject to overmastering impulses, often cried aloud in the meetings for mercy. On one occasion Turner tells that so piercing were the cries of awakened sinners, "they could scarcely have cried louder had they been in hell." Many were awakened, many converted, including some eighty-five years of age. In the midst of overwhelming labours his health, at no time very robust, gave way, and he began to spit up blood. "You are taking away your life," said his friends. "No," he replied, "I am only devoting it to the God who gave it." That he was enabled to prosecute labours so incessant and so exhausting with a feeble, consumptive, dying body, seems almost incredible. At length

the end came. His brief career closed on February 2nd, 1863. In his last moments he said, "I have no plea in the sight of God but *the blood*; yes, the blood, the precious blood." His last utterance was "CHRIST IS ALL."

No successful winner of souls ever possessed a humbler order of gifts or a smaller stock of learning than James Turner. In person diminutive and feeble-looking, with a slender voice and a squint eye, he possessed not one attractive feature, being in fact in bodily presence weak, and in speech contemptible. Apart from spiritual force there was in the man himself not one element of power. Learning, logic, pathos, eloquence of any kind he laid no claim to. He had no fresh light to throw on the great questions he essayed to handle. No aptness of illustration, no idiosyncrasy of manner, no persuasive grace characterized his preaching. The mercy of God, the efficacy of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, regeneration by the Holy Ghost, were from much study of the Scriptures and the teaching of the Spirit familiar to his thoughts. These great elementary truths were, so to say, burnt into his soul; yet he could scarce stay to discuss any one of them at length, if indeed he possessed mental power enough fully, clearly, and calmly to discourse on any one doctrine. His one great thought was the present opportunity of salvation given to men. First and last, it was with him *Now*, a tremendous, God-given *Now*. This *now* Turner saw with the judgment-seat immediately behind it; to his fervent soul the present moment seemed ever big with eternity to every one of his hearers, and ready next minute to open out into heaven or hell. This thought possessed him. He was wrapt in it, and spoke of a present salvation, or the dread alternative—its rejection, with prophet-like solemnity, and even terribleness. His preaching, his brief public career, the man himself, were alike and unique: a flash, a meteor, an apparition, a voice crying, "Now is the accepted time;" a bell ringing an alarm almost without a visible hand along the sea-shore. To multitudes

of the fisher-people Turner's preaching was like a loud calling from the deep, a portentous moan bidding them make for the shore. And doubtless many fled for refuge to the hope set before them in the gospel.

• We can understand the secret of Turner's strength when we find that it was his habit to covenant with God in this way: "May 1st, 1854.—A day, the return of which is ever sweet to my soul. It is fourteen years this day since I was enabled to give my heart to Jesus; and, Lord, Thou knowest I have never repented doing so. I now do so afresh, and I take all that is in this shop to witness. I take the sun that is shining in at my shop window, the pen with which I am writing, and the page that I am writing upon, all to witness that I give my soul, body, and spirit, a living sacrifice unto God. Take me, O my God, as I am, and use me for thy glory as Thou pleasest! I give Thee my time; I give Thee my talents; and if I had money Thou shouldst have it also; but I have none." And so on the covenant runs, in which he "signs himself over" to the Saviour, "James Turner, a filthy sinner washed in thy blood, and now being sanctified by thy Holy Spirit." At the same time he pleads for the members of the two classes given him by the Lord to lead. This kind of covenanting is not usual in shops, the testimony of the sun shining in at shop windows, of pens and writing paper, being for the most part exclusively employed for other ends. When Christ is with a man as really at his desk or counter as at the Lord's table, be sure that man's Christian influence will be widely felt before he dies.

The moral and social results of the work of grace in the many little towns and villages that dot the shores of the Moray Firth are remarkable both in character and extent. "Look at these rows of beautiful cottages," said a gentleman not long since to his friend, pointing at the same time to the neat, comfortable-looking dwellings of the fishermen in one of those northern villages. "These houses have sprung up as if by magic in

room of the wretched hovels in which the fisher-people used to live. That is the revival." "How is that?" asked the stranger, who could remember the former state of things. "I will tell you," was the reply. "Formerly the money that came from the deep salt sea went down into the depths of that more dark and bitter sea—the public-house. All that is changed. The revival came, and the public-house was dried up to the bottom, and you see the hard-won earnings of the fishermen in those handsome and comfortable homes. Revival is a reality here. You can see it, you can touch it, you can measure it, you can go into it and be sheltered by it, and taste some of its material sweets." Thousands of pounds, good English money, have been expended by the fishermen along the coast in the purchase of Bibles and copies of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. It is very pleasant in this materialistic age to see so spiritual a thing as revival in substantial stone and lime, and to read fresh comments on the Bible, and illustrations of the *Pilgrim's Progress* in the onward march of physical, social, and moral well-being among these till recently semi-barbarous populations. From the olden times, when their Scandinavian forefathers, pushing back into the interior the Pictish or Celtic natives, formed their first rude settlements along those iron-bound shores, every thing assumed a stereotyped form; life was wholly stagnant. But since the religious awakening has stirred the depths of those grave but impulsive natures, the movement forward appears nothing less than a marvel.

Duncan Matheson, a pre-eminent winner of souls during that period, has also passed away. Scotland has never seen a man more vehemently moved by a passion for saving men from sin than that true son of her own. If there was a lingering shadow of regret in the heart of that noble evangelist, as he lay peacefully awaiting the chariot of the King, it was that in heaven he would find no more opportunity of preaching Jesus to sinners, of searching for precious stones to shine in his Redeemer's

crown. He died with undiminished longings to save souls. It may be truly said he died of soul-winning. His memory is fragrant. All over the North of Scotland especially his name is a household word, for no other reason than that he was a lover of souls. I know an instance in which the mere mention of his name has been blessed. Some time ago in a North-eastern county a young man, a Roman Catholic, overheard his uncle, a Protestant, say to another with whom he was conversing, "that godly man now in glory, Duncan Matheson." The rest of the sentence was lost; but enough was heard to make a deep impression. "Now in glory," said the young man to himself; "I should like to know about that." He felt a strong desire to learn more concerning "that godly man." For two years the broken sentence kept coming and going in his thoughts. At length he opened his mind to his Protestant relative, and asked for an explanation. The explanation was given. The young man abandoned Rome, and became, it is believed, a decided follower of Christ. Like the dead man that came to life on touching the bones of the prophet, that youth was quickened by a mere fragment of the memory of a man who had been faithful to Christ. Thus the Lord honours them, living and dead, who honour Him. It seems as if, in the case of those who lived only to win souls, the Master loves to give them their desire even after they are dead and gone.*

One of the most remarkable monuments of divine grace in the revival of 1859-60, and an evangelist of a somewhat unique and extraordinary character, was Robert Cunningham, known everywhere throughout Scotland as "The Brigget Flesher." A prize-fighter, a drunkard, a profligate of the most reckless sort, a bloody and ferocious character, he was in the opinion of all who knew him hopelessly wicked, reprobate. One and one only did not despair of him. That one was his own mother, who never

* The Lives of James Turner, Robert Annan, and Duncan Matheson, have each been published.

ceased to pray for his salvation. He could not read. When awakened, being forty-six years of age, so great a stranger was he to the house of God, that he had never seen the Lord's table spread. He was converted, in 1859, in the famous Wynd Church, Glasgow, when the Rev. D. MacColl, now of Wandsworth, London, was at the head of the remarkable movement there. The awakened prize-fighter, kneeling in a corner at the after-meeting, was heard praying for salvation in this singular strain, "Lord, here's the channel, poor ye down the water." He was thirsting for the living water; and He who blessed the woman at Jacob's well created in the rocky heart of that hardened man a well of life, whose streams never afterwards ceased to flow. The moral change in him was astounding. To many it was a sign, a sermon, a gospel.

He became in his own way an earnest and useful labourer in the field of the gospel. His manner of address was rude, but natural and heart-moving. He spoke in his native Doric, which in him never offended the politest ear. He had but one text, one theme—"I am a monument of grace;" corresponding to Paul's "By the grace of God I am what I am." It was the story of his conversion; and though told a thousand times, the recital never grew stale, nor lost any of its freshness and power. Many scores of thousands up and down our country listened with profound interest and with tears to the testimony borne to Jesus and His Spirit by this untutored child of grace. At Huntly, for instance, we have seen an assemblage of ten thousand, including persons of rank and culture, men of all the learned professions in great numbers, officers of the army and navy, and many of every class, melted to tears under the simple heart-utterances of one who had learned to love much because he had been forgiven much. As illustrative of the fact that the way of the transgressor is hard, he would pause in the midst of his address, and with the tear on his cheek he would point to the eye he had lost in a prize-fight, and say, "Ah!

freens, the deevil's service is hard ; you see I lost an e'e in his service." This illustration was too vivid to be forgotten.

At Nairn his friends feared that in his ignorance of systematic theology he would offend the Highlanders, whose love of orthodoxy is very strong. Robert began his address thus : "In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth, when there was nane tae hinner Him an' nane tae help Him. My freens, look at me," and here he draws himself up to the full height of his stalwart form, and stretches out his brawny arms, "look at me ; I'm a moniment o' His grace !" Proceeding to tell the story of his conversion, he contrasted the two creations. While in the first there was none to hinder and none to help God, in the second, the new creation of grace, witness his own conversion, there was none to help, but there were many to hinder ; to wit, the devil and the world and the flesh. This quaint but affecting allusion to the sovereignty of God in the salvation of sinners took the hearts of his Highland audience by storm, and a deep impression was made by his words. Here then was a phenomenon. As a rule the audiences addressed by Robert Cunningham were much better acquainted with the letter of the truth than he was, yet he commanded their attention. He spoke with the power of a master, and produced effects that many learned teachers would almost give their right hand, as Dr. John Owen said in reference to Bunyan's preaching, to be able to produce. Thus it is that our attention is recalled to the too easily-forgotten truth—"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Robert Cunningham fearlessly delivered his testimony, worthily played his part, and having honourably finished his course, died in the faith.

H. M. Grant, Esq., of Arndilly, was one of the most earnest, sagacious, and indefatigable lay evangelists of this period. He was a striking instance of the *man of the world* transformed by grace into a *man of the world to come*. By nature strong-minded, courageous, downright, culture had done much to soften

a certain asperity of character arising out of an excess of the manlier virtues. Grace did much more. The perfect mellowing of this bold, brusque, rugged character in the later stages of life was strikingly illustrative of growth in grace. Uncompromising yet gentle, radiant yet chastened, a holy elevation blending with a sweet simplicity, the wisdom of years with the warmth of youth, a fiery energy with a dignified repose, he was truly one of the loveliest of aged Christian characters. At threescore and ten his heart was bounding with zeal in the work of the Lord. It was touching to see this fine old man, bowed beneath the weight of years, leaving his paradise at Arndilly at the very season when nature had put on her brightest charms to go forth with unquenched ardour to his loved work of preaching Christ. At the Stirling Conference, in May, 1869, he seemed already to be bathed in the full light of another world. Laying his hand kindly on the shoulder of one of his minister friends, he said, "You need rest. It is too soon for you to be worn out. Go to my place; take possession of everything; stay as long as you can; and you shall see what pure air, lovely scenery, and perfect quiet will do for you." In answer to the question when he intended returning home, he replied solemnly, "I am not going to Arndilly now; I do not need rest; *I must work.*" Accordingly he held on his way southward, working as he had opportunity; and not many months afterwards died at Newcastle, falling with his harness on. Most men of great age and abundant means speak of being too old to work, and winning souls is the hardest work on earth. See how the grace of God and the light of eternity revolutionize the ideas of a man. He was *too old to rest!* Brave old man, thou hast entered into rest!

Of kindred spirit, although belonging to a different class, was Robert Annan, the rude, fearless, yet tender-hearted street-preacher of Dundee. Himself the offspring of the revival of 1859-60, he was like all the men of that period, much given to secret prayer. To prayer he often gave whole nights, and this was

the secret of his strength. An unrecorded instance at once of the power of prayer, and of his faith in God, I will here give. On one occasion two young men, both of them earnest Christian workers, accompanied him to a little fishing village some miles south of Aberdeen, where they held an evangelistic meeting. As they returned in the darkness of night the horse suddenly took fright, and rushed with fearful speed and violence close by the precipitous rocks that overhang the sea. Incapable of managing the infuriated animal, Annan's companions in wild alarm, suggested that they should throw themselves from the vehicle as their only hope of escape. Perfectly calm and self-possessed, he dissuaded them from their purpose; then raising his voice aloud to heaven, he prayed, "O Father, stop the horse!" Next moment the horse stood still, and with the exception of some slight damage to the vehicle, they found themselves safe, though on the brink of destruction. While others were speculating on the efficacy of prayer, Robert Annan was praying; and so thoroughly persuaded was he of its power, that he spent most of his time on the mount of God. Obeying his divine Master's injunction, he was much in the practice of entering into his closet, shutting the door, and praying to his Father who is in secret; and the "Father who seeth in secret" has since "rewarded him openly," by the sweet savour of his memory, and the blessing which his example of heroic devotion to the good of others has brought to many. Better still, his record and his reward are on high.

The awakening sixteen years ago was beyond question a remarkable work of grace. On its front it bore the broad seal of heaven. It began in prayer; it was carried on by prayer and the preaching of the Word. It was accompanied by two good signs—a great fear of God, and much of the world's reproach; and it was followed by the consecrated lives of its children. In Scotland many thousands were "added to the Lord." Of these

a large proportion consisted of young men, not a few of whom are now ministers at home or missionaries abroad. In fact, there is scarcely a church in which you do not find some of them in honourable posts of office or useful spheres of work. Nor is there a foreign mission in connection with which some of them are not labouring. Out of that movement there sprang, too, an host of Sabbath-school teachers, district visitors, and other Christian workers. The impulse given to family religion was a striking feature. Many of the converts of that period are this very day busy training the tendrils of the household vine. Many others, after a quiet, useful Christian course, have fallen asleep in Jesus. We could ourselves almost fill a volume with the records of peaceful, hallowed death-bed scenes, the calm or triumph of the last hours meetly closing lives of holy, cheerful obedience in the Lord.

In short, the cause of the gospel made a decided advance. The progress and its signs varied in various parts of the field. In some quarters it was only a breaking-up of the ice after a long, dreary winter; in others it was an advance from spring to summer; whilst in many more it was a passing from summer to autumn, with its scenes of joyous toil, and its harvest-homes. From that time the pulse of Christian life in the land has beat more strongly and healthfully. In worship and in work there has been more warmth and freedom, more spontaneous effort and hope. The watchword of the day was the power of prayer. The efficacy of prayer was tested by ten thousand earnest, united voices, and was attested by a thousand blessed answers—answers, too, that came in a manner as striking as fire from heaven, although doubtless in the greater number of instances the blessing came stealing in as silently and softly as the sunbeams that play in the secluded haunts of nature, or lodge in the bosom of the forest.

Some of the definite results of the revival of 1859-60 may be here stated.

1. The personality, office, and work of the Holy Spirit came into greater prominence in the worship, teaching, and work of the Church.

2. Conversion as an outstanding fact in Christian experience, and as the very threshold of true Christian life, came more clearly into view in the congregation, the class, and the family. The suddenness of conversion ceased in a considerable degree to be a bugbear.

3. Assurance of personal salvation came more widely to be regarded as the privilege of every Christian. It was held by a vastly increased number that it was neither unreasonable nor unscriptural that young believers should have as real joy and peace in believing as the ripest saints.

4. From this it followed that a much more genial and happy tone of Christian thought and feeling was recognised as proper to the godly.

5. The frequent singing of evangelical songs, both in worship and for mutual edification, is one of the legacies of the revival in 1859-60, and has largely contributed towards preparing the churches for the recent awakening. It is worthy of note, that the doctrine of assurance and the singing of gospel hymns ever rise and fall with the Church's life. When the Church is revived, her sons, happy in the consciousness of the love of God, sing their experience in suitable songs of praise.

6. The proper use and value of lay-agency in carrying on the work of Christ were more fully acknowledged; and henceforth it became an article of common belief in the churches that every Christian ought in some way to work.

7. Out of the movement sprang a host of devoted workers, who, having in remembrance the happy days of their spiritual youth, laboured and prayed incessantly for another great season of grace.



CHAPTER III.

RISE, PROGRESS, AND GENERAL FEATURES OF THE MOVEMENT.

DURING recent years there had been a wide-spread longing, more or less intense, among Christians in this country, for a fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost. In many quarters this longing took shape in desires for greater personal sanctification. In other quarters it assumed the form of godly sorrow on account of the deadness of the churches and the unbelief of the world. Perhaps the Church of Christ is never in a more healthy state, or at all events in a better attitude for receiving blessing, than when, in painful consciousness of her own shortcomings and the world's great sin, she lays herself down in prayer at the feet of her Lord. For years past, from many a closet and family, from many a congregation and prayer-meeting, the cry had been going up—"Wilt Thou not revive us yet again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?" It was like the piercing cry from beneath the altar—"How long, O Lord, holy and true?" There was something of the martyr spirit in it; for it was the utterance of hearts bleeding with sympathy for the suffering cause and honour of Jesus. In this way many were "partakers of the afflictions of the gospel;" and the gospel never is more deeply afflicted than when it is treated with indifference and scorn. The saints were being taken home, and it was feared that their

Rev. 1-8.

places were left wholly vacant or not adequately filled up. Now and then a sinner was converted; but this seemed only to breathe new energy into the prayer for a general awakening. Here and there a congregation or a locality enjoyed a season of spiritual refreshing; but in many quarters the signs of blessing were less numerous than the signs of decay. There was a great war of machinery—work, work, work, with poor results. In some places the hand of death was on the Church's heart. Men of God were wrangling about union; men of the world were mocking. Like weeds in a bad season, deadly error was springing up. The adversary became very bold; the efficacy of prayer was challenged from the very pulpit, and Broad-churchism was beginning to proclaim its heartless gospel on every side.

Meanwhile Christian workers were busy. In many a family, school, and congregation there was ploughing and sub-soiling, sowing and harrowing, in the faith that harvest-time would surely come.

"Do you remember," said one minister to another recently, "what you were saying eighteen months ago about the office of the ministry? You said it was a hard, hard life, and that you would advise students to beware of going forward to the work unless they had an uncommonly clear call from God. You were sad enough then. What are you saying now?" The other, in whose congregation a remarkable work of grace has taken place, replied in cheery tones, "All that is changed now." Going on to tell how, after years of labour and prayer, hundreds in his church and neighbourhood have recently been converted, he added, with the tear in his eye, "Best of all, my own children are converted too."

"Why should we wonder at this great work of the Spirit?" said another minister. "This is the very thing we have been praying for since the close of the last revival, fifteen years ago."

"The prayer-meeting has got very low," said an earnest Christian to his pastor. "It seems to me it is going down

altogether." "Not at all," replied the pastor, who tried to look cheerful, although he felt depressed. "The fact is, we are being tried; we are being reduced like Gideon's host; and when we are brought sufficiently low to appreciate the blessing, and have no hope but in God, there will be a great reviving, and *that* you will see. Those who hold on through the bad time are ever the first to see the good." So it happened; for in that place there has been an outpouring of the Spirit, causing the ordinary channels to overflow. In six months the minister added one hundred and fifty to the roll of the church's membership, and so many more believed through grace that there was not room to receive them.

An able and indefatigable minister of the gospel publicly stated that, previous to the beginning of this awakening, he was so much depressed in consequence of his want of success that he thought of resigning his charge; but a few months entirely changed the face of things, for in that short space of time he had gathered a far richer harvest, especially in the conversion of young men, than had fallen to his hand during the many years of his ministry.

The first stage in the movement was the work at Newcastle. Tidings of the awakening in the North of England aroused the attention of Christians throughout the country, especially in Scotland, and inspired them with the hope of approaching revival. That the Lord on high signals to His faithful ones by providential events of a striking character, and by special movements of the Holy Ghost, is not to be disputed. There is a sound of the Lord's goings on the top of the mulberry trees, the foretoken of victory to Israel's host, which the keen, spiritual instincts of holy men can more easily interpret than explain. However that may be, the tidings of the Newcastle revival were to many as a signal displayed from heaven, and they gave themselves to more fervent and believing prayer.

1 Chron. 14. 15.

The second stage was the work in Edinburgh. That city, as every one knows, is not merely the capital of Scotland: it is the metropolis of Scottish religion, education, and refinement. The revival of 1859-60 scarcely touched the proud city; certainly it did not greatly move it. Now it seemed as if it had been suddenly swept by the mighty rushing wind from heaven. Tidings of the awakening rolled over the country like solemn peals. Was the capital aroused? Was the stronghold of devout formalism captured? Was the lofty castle of religious gentility trembling at the sound of the rams' horns? An extraordinary sympathy, tender and prayerful, was now awakened on behalf of our principal city throughout the provinces, even to the remotest Highland glen. Everywhere it was felt, that as light usually travels from great centres, it was of supreme moment that the city set on a hill should be well lit. The thousand flashing lights newly kindled on her high places would be seen afar. So indeed it was. In all this we cannot but mark the hand of God. The revival in Edinburgh was like a Pentecost to the land.

The third epoch in the movement was the Edinburgh circular, calling the people of Scotland to prayer on the first week of 1874, from the 4th to the 11th January. It was signed by the most eminent men of all the churches—ministers, theological professors, and laymen. It was admirably conceived, and breathed throughout a solemn, tender spirit. It proved to be a word in season. It was striking the iron while it was hot. Gather a multitude together, and it is easy enough to raise a common cry. At such a moment a child can give the word that enthusiasm will bear in loud voices to the sky. By this time the people of God were in spirit gathered for prayer. The gathering at the mercy-seat in the working of the one Spirit that unifies the true Church in her many members was already effected. To the invitation from the capital a remarkable response was given. In every city and town, in many little villages and rural dis-

52.33-3
tricts, and even in out-of-the-world glens and straths, meetings were held. That week of prayer was like the advent of spring. The warm breath that went up from parched souls came back in refreshing dews. Such prayer is not merely preparation for revival, it is revival begun. The key-note of the call from Edinburgh was in brief the word of promise: "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not." Many were sweetly moved to comply with this gracious invitation of the Hearer of prayer; and truly the answer was given in "great and mighty things" that were not looked for.

Oct 26. 18.
The next remarkable point in the progress of the movement was the extraordinary work among the young men of Glasgow, and the call from that city for prayer on behalf of the youth of Scotland. This well-timed call was joyfully responded to throughout the country. The facts of the work of grace among the young men in the great city of the west gave wing to prayer. A certain definiteness and peculiar interest were thus imparted to the intercessions of that period. Families both in town and country were thrilled with joy, unexpected tidings reaching them of son or brother born again. Young men were startled and impressed; some were awakened and converted by letters from companions announcing the fact that they had been "turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." We can recall how at this time, in the late evening hours, we found groups of young men and boys at the street corners engaged in absorbing and warm discussion of the gospel, some rejoicing in the Saviour, some enquiring, and some simply stunned, not knowing what to think or say. More than one week of prayer was observed in many families. Parents whose sons were just leaving the family roof; parents whose sons had recently gone to the large cities, and were walking on the verge of unknown dangers; parents whose sons had already crossed the Rubicon of moral restraint or of filial duty, some of them

lost to view, or seen tossing afar off on the breakers; parents who had laboured and wept for their children's salvation for many years,—were now enabled to pray in the hopeful feeling that a time of blessing had at length come. They prayed as they had never prayed before. Fathers and mothers were aided by a conspiring host of believing brothers and sisters, faithful pastors and teachers. It was one of those seasons of summing up in prayer and spiritual effort which occur now and again; for somehow there comes at times a winding-up of spiritual business and Christian work, when the balance is struck, and we are made to wonder at the splendid returns with which Grace in her exceeding riches unexpectedly rewards the feeble and imperfect efforts of months or years.

A further stage was reached when, early in the summer of 1874, the interest awakened in Scotland became almost universal. There was scarcely a town of any size, we doubt if there was a hamlet or parish, where Christians were not found bestirring themselves and trimming their lamps. Dark indeed were those places where some benighted soul was not coming into the light. Dead, twice dead surely, were those churches in which no spirit of enquiry was stirring. In times of refreshing, churches will resemble either the tree planted by the rivers of water, or the heath in the desert, that does not see when good cometh. Some drink and live; some dry and die. But although too many church doors were carefully barred against the mysterious influence that was abroad, neither the anathemas of bigotry nor the sneers of religious libertinism could stifle the cry of souls awakened as by a divine touch to a new consciousness. A minister warns his people against the "prevalent sensationalism;" but some of his hearers, heedless of the warning, attend the meetings of the evangelists, receive a blessing from above, and are fully convinced that the old gospel contains something not to be found in their pastor's new philosophy. Another minister has "no patience with revival-

ism;" but some of his own sons and daughters are converted, and being able to give a reason for the hope that is in them, the father holds his peace if he does not change his mind upon the matter.

An incident related to me by a devoted evangelist will illustrate the wide sweep the movement was now taking. In a Highland county, far away from the scene of the great meetings in the South, a little evangelistic service is being held. An unwonted sense of divine things falls upon the Christians present, and their prayers possess unusual fervour. To the astonishment of every one, the rudest, most illiterate, most reckless sinner in all the country-side enters the room, and straightway reveals his purpose by pouring ridicule on the service, and profanely endeavouring to excite all around to laughter. This does not last long. An arrow from an unseen bow pierces the conscience of this child of Belial. Impelled by the sheer force of conviction, he acknowledges before all that he is a miserable sinner, and is fain to ask what he must do to be saved. For the first time in his life he bows his knees in prayer. And such a prayer! Probably a more singular prayer was never offered. "For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen." was all the prayer. It was a cry from the depths. It was a bill with an honoured name, the amount being left blank for the generosity of the Promiser to fill up. It was a loud knock at heaven's gate. It was like the cry of the beggar, "A poor blind man! A poor blind man!" And that is very nearly the sum and substance of all prayer.

Not far from the house where that ignorant man was seeking the light there stands amidst the most beautiful scenery a proud castle. The mistress of that noble mansion, with its romantic scenery and its broad acres, titled, cultured, gifted above most of her class, and possessed of every element of happiness that wealth, rank, refinement, or domestic relationships can supply, suddenly becomes restless and dissatisfied. There is surely

something in the air. The influences of the time have reached her too. Thoughts of eternity seize her. Turning away from all that ministers to the eye, the ear, the taste, as from utter vanity, she betakes herself for solitude to the highest part of the castle, where at the feet of the Master she reads the great book of destiny—her long-neglected Bible. There too she prays for light, for mercy, for salvation. She is as helpless, if not also as ignorant, spiritually, as the awakened boor, who begins his prayer, as some would reckon, at the wrong end. She too says, "For Jesus Christ's sake." Light comes down, and she enters into the peace of God, and the fellowship of Christ. Thus as the rainbow spans the earth, embracing mountain and valley, and bespeaking the blessing of the ancient covenant both for the wild moorland and the fruitful field, so grace in its beneficent sweep enfolds the extremes of society, bringing the same salvation to the cultured mind and the child of ignorance.

During 1874 the movement, while it seemed to lose nothing in point of intensity, gained in breadth day by day. The quietest schools were stirred, the dullest churches were moved. Every sermon had its reference to the work, every prayer its special burden. Every newspaper had its paragraph, in which, for the most part, criticism was somehow disarmed. Every traveller had his story. In the train, in the busy mart, on 'Change, no place was too secular, no business too pressing, no company too gay, to exclude all reference to the topic of the day. Everywhere the new songs of Zion fell upon your ear. The streets and highways were full of earnest conversation on the work of grace and the way of life. I have seen a group of little children, the oldest not more than twelve, engaged in solemn converse upon the street, and overheard one explaining to the rest the plan of salvation by Jesus who died for sinners. "That is the rale gospel," exclaimed an Irishman to his fellow-workmen, with a voice loud enough to be heard by all around; "that is the

rare gospel. Jesus Christ has come into the world to seek and to save the lost. Sure, an' it would melt the heart o' a stone!"

In the great cities of England and Ireland prayer-meetings, some of them daily, were established, so great was the interest awakened. Abroad, on the continent of Europe, in America, in the West Indies, in South Africa, in all the British colonies, in India, and in China, men were deeply impressed by the tidings of the revival. Christians were roused; in some places union prayer-meetings were formed, and the conversion of sinners followed. At a meeting in Dundee the Rev. John Fordyce, of Simla, stated that when he left Northern India, early in the year 1874, the dry bones were stirring under the life-giving breath of the Holy Spirit. When he reached Southern India, the same phenomenon met his eye. On going on board ship, he found the spirit of earnest enquiry stirring there. On reaching London, he entered a church and found a revival in progress. At Edinburgh he witnessed the heart-moving indications of the remarkable work of grace. Passing northwards to Aberdeen, he found the daily meeting for prayer, saints rejoicing, and sinners pressing into the kingdom of God. Retiring for a little to a quiet rural parish in Aberdeenshire, what was his astonishment to find a spiritual awakening in full tide. "Such," he added, "is the might of the Spirit." In all this we perceive a little instalment of the great promise yet to be fulfilled in all its divine vastness: "I will pour out my Spirit on *all flesh*."

The general features of the awakening were sufficiently marked to afford matter of observation. The chief points may be noted here.

1. The remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of grace and supplication. There was a joyful union in prayer, an unwonted faith in its efficacy, a singular fervour, liberty, and delight in its exercise, never to be forgotten.

2. A marked increase of the spirit of unity and unanimity

among Christians of the various evangelical denominations. Hard words were indeed spoken, but only to fall to the ground like leaves in autumn. Attempts to excite controversy rose and fell like sudden gusts of wind in a great calm; and the most laboured attack on the work resembled nothing so much as a storm of hail in summer, that breaks a few window-panes, frightens the little children, and passes away amidst the brightening sunshine. Thousands realized "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" as they had never done. Even the world saw this, and were impressed by it.

3. The comparative absence of excitement and extravagance. The calmness and sweetness of the movement have been frequently noticed.

4. The immense number of the children of Christian parents and other young persons religiously trained who were converted was a striking feature of this revival. The majority of converts probably consisted of this class.

5. The large numbers of young men embraced by the movement.

6. The increased number of persons of the middle and upper classes that have been reached. The evangelization of the rich and well-to-do people of the world is one of the hardest of all tasks.

7. The strengthening of the churches. There have been no divisions, no schisms, and no new sects. It has been the infusion of new blood into the existing bodies. The increase, if not in numbers, in spiritual power has in some cases been thirtyfold, in some sixty, and in some an hundredfold.

8. An extraordinary impulse has been communicated to Christian work in all its departments. This one result is of incalculable value. Instead of looking within and brooding over their feelings and experiences, many of the converts have happily given themselves to work, "looking unto Jesus."

9. The world-wide interest that has been excited in the

movement. Voices calling from the ends of the earth, What is this? and others everywhere making answer, "It is the doing of the Lord, and wondrous in our eyes."

Many thousands of Christians of every evangelical denomination have borne testimony to the spiritual character of the movement. Among these are ministers of the gospel, the most eminent in the land, God-fearing elders and deacons, learned professors in our universities and theological halls, physicians, lawyers, men proficient in science and literature, merchants, men of every business, and persons employed in all the industries of our country. In short, an immense number of Christians of every social grade, every degree of intelligence, every shade of temperament and type of character, have with singular unanimity borne sober, decided witness to the work. Not only so; a great number of others, several thousands at least, including every age and every class, solemnly profess to have received in the course of this movement the grace that sanctifies and saves. Among these there are young men in hundreds, the youth in our schools a very host, students in the arts, in medicine, in law, in theology; merchants, clerks, tradesmen, work-people, cabmen, soldiers, sailors, gay people of fashion, persons of every religion and no religion, sceptics, drunkards, profligates; in a word, sinners of every class and hue. The testimony of these has been given for the most part with a modesty befitting the solemn character of the profession, and with an intelligence that indicates a full appreciation of the responsibilities assumed; while in the vast majority of cases the subsequent life has attested the sincerity of the profession. Now, on what ground can any man dare to say, All that experience is a delusion; all that profession is a lie? On what conceivable ground can any professing Christian, denying this overwhelming mass of testimony, expect to be regarded by others as being himself a true believer? In truth, to deny such a volume of reasonable, consistent, scriptural testimony is like throwing snowballs at the sun.



CHAPTER IV.

THE PRINCIPAL AGENTS IN THIS WORK.

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."
ZECH. iv. 6.

"**H**OW is it that these Americans are doing the work? Was there not energy enough in this country to carry it on?" To this question, put at the close of a meeting last year, the following reply was given: "I will answer your question by asking another. How was it that last century, when America enjoyed the ministry of Jonathan Edwards, one of the most accomplished divines and learned preachers that have appeared in the Church of Christ since the days of the apostles, George Whitefield was called from England to be the chosen instrument of the Holy Spirit for the reviving of religion in the New World? Could not He who used one sermon of Edwards's for the awakening of a whole congregation have similarly blessed the same sermon to a thousand congregations? The answer is, It seemed meet to God, in His sovereign pleasure, that the work should be done in that way, and in no other way."

All the works of God bear the impress of His wisdom and power. In the spiritual sphere it seems to be specially meet that His work should bear the kingly stamp of His sovereignty; because in this world, where He is disrowned, man watches to thrust his poor pitiful self into the room of the King eternal.

In every great movement of the Holy Ghost the sovereignty of God is displayed both in regard to the agencies employed and the peculiar features of the work. As in these respects this last awakening differed from previous manifestations of the Spirit, so probably the next revival will differ from the present and past movements in a manner and to an extent of which we cannot now form even a vague forecast. Of each successive divine work it will still be true—"This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." Such, moreover, is the inveterate tendency of the Christian Church to put an idolatrous trust in the well-equipped arm of her regular ministry, that we need not marvel if God, who is a "jealous God," should now and again call to special and distinguished service men neither learned nor ordained, in order to show that no flesh shall glory in His presence. It is not out of harmony either with His word or His ways that He should call from a distant land two humble, God-fearing men, almost unknown, without office, influence, or name in this country to be His chosen and honoured instruments in this work.

There is in the kingdom of God on earth an obvious division of labour. "One soweth and another reapeth," in order, no doubt, to show the hand of the Master both in the sowing and the reaping. Paul plants and Apollos waters, a division of labour designed to show that the increase is of God. The evangelist will sometimes reap in a week the field that has taken the pastor years to cultivate and prepare for harvest. The work of the latter resembles the patient toil of the quarryman who pierces the rock by the slow process of boring in preparation for the blast. His protracted, never-ending labour is scarcely noticed. The evangelist comes with his match, and his work for suddenness and result strikes every beholder. Like the stoker on the locomotive, it is the part of the evangelist to stir and feed the furnace, and thus call into play the motive-power;

while, like the driver, the pastor should regulate the forces in the line of safe and steady progress. To each the Master assigns his work, and to each He will apportion the suitable reward.

While it is true that God is pleased to choose "weak things to confound the things that are mighty," it is equally certain that He fits the instrument for the special work. In the conversion of a sinner there is ever an infinite disproportion between the spiritual result and the instrumentality employed. Apart from the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit, the most splendid effort of genius is but the gleaming of a sword without an arm to wield it. And yet the weakest of the "weak things" employed by the Spirit is in itself a power. A mind informed with divine knowledge, a heart purified and sweetened by grace, a faith that pierces the spirit-world with a keener eye than genius, a love at once in harmony with absolute holiness and in sympathy with the most abject child of sin, a voice sustained by omnipotent intercessions within the veil, combine to form the spiritual worker, whose conscious feebleness is a mighty power in that higher sphere in which unsanctified wisdom is foolishness, and the forces of the natural man are only spent in beating the air.

Dwight L. Moody was born in 1837, at Northfield, Massachusetts, and was converted at Boston when seventeen years of age, through the combined instrumentality of the earnest, searching words of the late Dr. Kirk, and the faithful personal dealings of Mr. Kimball, a Sabbath-school teacher. Going to Chicago at the age of nineteen, he gave himself to Sabbath-school work, and became signally successful in seeking out and gathering into school the neglected little children of the city. This mission school being well supplied with teachers, he began another in a more spiritually-destitute part of the city, and succeeded in gathering a thousand children.

By-and-by he began the practice of visiting the little ones in their homes, and calling them together in groups for conversation and prayer. At these little homely meetings, the words spoken to children fell on the ears of parents, and some, both of the parents and the children, were brought to the Saviour. This necessitated a step in advance. The meetings growing too large for private rooms, an old store was rented and fitted up. Here many, both old and young, were turned to the Lord. Again the place becoming too small, by the generous aid of friends who saw the importance of the work, a large, substantial, brick building was erected. A constantly increasing measure of blessing attended the work, the very success compelling the earnest and indefatigable worker to advance a step further. A Church was organized; and from that time the whole work has prospered more and more.

During the war he went to the army several times in connection with the Christian Commission, and visited the soldiers in hospital. Called to speak to large bodies of men, he gradually acquired greater facility of address. His labours were appreciated, and his sphere of usefulness enlarged. At the same time his bold and judicious efforts in connection with the Young Men's Christian Association led him into a wider, if not more important field, and contributed not a little to his training in evangelistic work.

His early education was extremely defective; but his experience in Sabbath-school teaching, his labours in the home mission field, his work in the army, especially in ministering to sick, wounded, and dying soldiers, his varied and successful efforts for the promotion of Christianity among young men, and the terrible ordeal of the great conflagration, when he had nothing left of all he possessed save "his Bible and his reputation," have served effectively to qualify him for the work of an evangelist. Passing through the schools of Christian work, Christian experience, and sore affliction, he could scarcely fail to

learn some lessons in each. In the school of Christian work, an apt scholar will develop energy and tact; in the school of Christian experience, faith and love, or trust towards God and tenderness towards men, will be the lessons; while affliction yields the choice virtues of humility and patience. In these respects the "profiting" of our evangelist must appear to all men. His whole career, especially its more eventful passages, have supplied him with those happy illustrations that give point, and interest, and the charm of naturalness to his addresses, for the lack of which so many able and learned discourses every week perish in the dull ears of sermon-hearers. A single instance may be given. It is the story of the great fire when Chicago was laid in ruins. Many thousands of human beings were burnt out of house and home, and compelled to camp in the open fields. Rich men had in a single day lost all their wealth. From the possession of every earthly comfort, multitudes were reduced to poverty, nakedness, and famine. Homeless, penniless, without bread, without hope, and cut off from the outer world by the destruction of railway and telegraph, death in its most appalling form stared them in the face. And yet, as Mr. Moody tells, no unmanly cry was heard, no tear was shed during those fearful days. Suddenly news flashed in upon them from New York and other American cities, from across the Atlantic too, from London, from Edinburgh, and other cities in this country, announcing that money and food were being forwarded without delay. What was the effect? The tidings sent a thrill through the crowd of sufferers, and brave men, whom neither hunger, nor the loss of all things, nor even the prospect of death, could daunt, bowed their heads and wept. "It was kindness that broke their hearts," says the Chicago evangelist. "So," he adds, "it is that the kindness and love of God in the gospel of His Son melts the hearts of sinners; for oftentimes men whom no judgments will subdue are softened into penitence at the foot of the cross."

Physically robust, Mr. Moody possesses an immense capacity for work, and an uncommon power of endurance. A clear, cool head, strong common sense, a keen eye to the practical, a never-failing fertility of resource, a will strong and prompt enough to supply rapid and unfaltering decision, and a heart of much warmth and sensibility, combine in him to form a character of the most robust type, and to fit him pre-eminently for leading as well as working. While a man of one idea, he has breadth enough to keep himself in harmony with every thing real and good. Possessed of no learning, he yet admires learning in others. A lay-preacher, he loves and honours an ordained ministry, especially when it is found in the way of righteousness. Himself a free lance, he respects order and discipline. Fired with zeal for winning souls, his heart beats in sympathy with every thing affecting the physical and social well-being of men. In short, shrewd, brusque, practical, he is also genial and sympathetic, the affectionateness of his nature infusing a softness into a character which otherwise would have been in its vehemence rude, and in its roughness hard to bear. The consecration of these varied elements of character to the highest ends, simplicity of faith and singleness of eye, appear to be, under God, the secret of his success. Obviously enough, he and his companion in the work, while skilfully employing every particle of their strength, subordinate all that is natural to the spiritual, the predominant feeling being a sense of indebtedness to a Divine Friend—an affectionate and reverent desire to serve and honour One to whom they owe so much, and in whose kindness and sympathy, as well as power, they have the most perfect trust.

The secret run of such feeling, that under-tone of Christian work, is expressed in the words of the simple hymn—

"I hear the Saviour say,
Thy strength indeed is small;
Child of weakness, watch and pray,
Find in Me thine all in all.

"Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow."

Or in the well-known lines—

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
It were a gift by far too small;
For love so wondrous, so divine,
Deserves my life, my soul, my all."

The very spirit of work for Christ, the very tone and temper which the Master seems most of all to insist upon and to bless, is love to Himself. Speaking to one of His chief workers, ere sending him forth a broken-hearted, yet noble-spirited ambassador of the cross, the Lord Jesus says nought of intellect, or learning, or eloquence, albeit these are His own choice gifts to men, and worthy of being coveted; but He lays threefold stress on the "more excellent way" of love; and as if this was the main thing in doing His work, in feeding His sheep and His lambs, He says to Peter again and again, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" In addressing that leading and model worker, the Lord seemed to anticipate the Church's bane—the worship of the intellectual, the undue exaltation of the merely official. A burning love to Christ has been too little regarded as a *sine quâ non* for ministerial service, or at least it has been looked upon as a very commonplace affair. Is not the Master teaching His disciples a lesson in our day? And is not the lesson in substance this: In His work and by His Spirit *heart* and *soul* will carry the day? This should be the burning question of our theological halls; nay, it should be no question, but rather the burning answer of the student's heart to every question.

In his preaching Mr. Moody does not usually attempt a full doctrinal statement, such as falls to the pastoral office. In a simple, pictorial style, with much felicity of illustration, occasional gleams of humour, and frequent touches of pathos,

he sets forth the central truths of the gospel with that homely, dramatic vividness which delights the hearts of the common people. Perhaps the most striking feature is his tenderness. He weeps, and his audience weep with him. It is not the pathos of mere rhetoric. Standing beside him in the pulpit of the Established Church at Banff, I heard the sound of his weeping as he pled with God for perishing men, while in the intervening pauses I could distinctly hear the weeping of the people. No wonder if at such a moment many a hard heart was melted, and men prayed who never prayed before. This uncommon sensibility, associated as it is with a wholesome tone of sense and a manly robustness of character, has in it nothing akin to an effeminate sentimentalism or a morbid melancholy. It is a stream of honest Christian sympathy, whose waters sparkle in the sunshine, and reflect the brightness of peaceful skies. A manner so full of heart, reminds us of the great apostle who could say, "Remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

Of his homely, dramatic style I will try and give a specimen. The scene is at Jericho, where the rich little publican happens to meet Bartimeus just after the opening of his eyes. Zaccheus, astounded and taken aback, exclaims, "That ain't 'ou, Bartimeus!"

"Aye, but it is," is the reply.

"Why, where did you get 'em eyes?"

"I got 'em from Jesus of Nazareth."

"What! how did He do it?"

"Why, He jist spake, and I jist saw."

"Where is He? I must have a sight of Him."

"He is jist goin' out by the western gate; an' if you want to catch Him, you had better hurry up."

Whereupon the little publican hastens away to see the Prophet of Nazareth.

A quaint, terse, incisive style is combined with shrewd mascu-

line sense ; as for instance in his commentary on the parable of the supper, when the invited "with one consent began to make excuse."

One said he had bought a piece of ground, and must needs go and see it. "That is very lame," says the preacher. "Was the ground going to run away? Why, he could have waited till to-morrow."

Another said he had bought five yoke of oxen, and was going to prove them. "A very poor excuse. He was a bad business man, or he would have proved them before he bought them. Now the bargain was settled he could let the proving stand over a little."

A third had married a wife, and could not come. "This," exclaims the preacher, "is worse still. Why, everybody knows that a young wife likes nothing better than to go to a pleasant party. He should have gone and taken his wife with him."

Ira D. Sankey was born in Edinburgh, in the State of Pennsylvania, in 1840. His parents were pious, and he was religiously brought up. His first recollections of anything pertaining to a holy life, he stated at a meeting in Dundee, were in connection with a godly Scotchman, who lived on a farm adjoining his father's. "I remember," he says, "he took me by the hand along with his own boys to the Sabbath-school, that old place which I will remember to my dying day. He was a plain man, and I can see him standing up and praying for the children. He had a great, warm heart, and the children all loved him. It was years after that when I was converted, but my impressions were received when I was very young from that man." His conversion took place at a little country place of worship, three miles from his father's house, where special meetings were being held. As he sat with his companions, light-hearted and heedless, an old elder of the Church went up and spoke to him about his soul. Night after night the old man sought him out after the

sermon, and earnestly counselled him to decide for Christ. After a struggle, lasting a week, he was brought to Jesus.

Giving himself to Sabbath-school work, he took special delight in training the children to sing. Blessing attended his labours. One day after the terrible fire at Chicago he was invited to visit a child who lay dying in a miserable hut, everything having been burned in the fire. "I wish you would speak to my father and mother," said the dying child. "But are you a Christian?" "Yes," was the reply. "When did you become one?" "Do you remember last Thursday in the Tabernacle, when we had that little singing meeting, and you sang, 'Jesus loves even me'?" It was last Thursday I believed on the Lord Jesus; and now I am going to be with Him to-day." Stimulated by such results, Mr. Sankey was led to devote himself to the cultivation of sacred song as a means of promoting the kingdom of Christ; and it became his life-work.

He is not a mere leader of sacred song; he is, in his own way, a preacher of the gospel. The words of his preaching are borne to the ear, the understanding, and the heart, on the light and graceful wing of musical sounds. His is indeed a rare faculty. Its characteristic lies not so much in compass, strength, or richness of voice, as in a matchless distinctness of articulation, by which he can convey to an audience of many thousands every word sung. His chief concern is, not the melody, nor the distinctness of articulation, nor even in throwing the whole heart and soul into the effort, but the spiritual result, whether in the edification of the Christian or the conversion of the sinner. Like the postman, who heeds not whether the door-bell rings loud or low provided only he succeeds in delivering his letter, Mr. Sankey's obvious desire is not to produce a mere artistic effect, but to carry a spiritual truth with saving impression into the hearts of his audience. There are many avenues to the human heart. Having found one avenue but little employed, he has shown us, after the manner of the sweet singer of Israel,

how the truth may steal in by a neglected and much-abused door, when the main entrance has been barred against it. The singer has indeed rung the bell for the preacher; but he rings it so sweetly, with such intelligence and expression, that by the blessing of God many have been arrested in the porch and converted ere ever they heard the first sentence of the preacher's discourse.

Mr. Sankey has been associated with Mr. Moody in Christian work for several years. First in Chicago, and afterwards in other cities of America, they sought by combined effort to win souls. When in this country in 1872, Mr. Moody was persuaded that the field for evangelistic labour was wide, and full of promise. Accordingly, taking advantage of the breathing-time afforded by the rebuilding of his church, he came over to England in the following year. His purpose was twofold; viz., to do some work as opportunity might occur, and to occupy his leisure in a fresh and more thorough investigation of the Word of God, little dreaming how great the work should be, and how small the leisure. His companion in labour, rejecting urgent invitations to service elsewhere, accompanied him in the joyful hope of doing work for the great Master in the *Old Country*.

Whilst we frankly recognize the gifts and services of the two American evangelists, we do not forget that were they gifted fiftyfold, and were their services a hundred times more extensive and efficient, it were in the last degree absurd and even impious to attribute to them or their labours the recent awakening and its fruits. On many a field in this country from which a golden harvest has of late been reaped their eyes never looked. Even in respect of the work in which they were honoured to take so large a part, they were but the reapers whom the Master hired from a distant field. Ere ever they left their own country the work was done, or at least, speaking roughly, nineteen-twentieths of the work, so far as human labour is concerned, was done. Mr. Moody, after an extensive experience in this

country, declared that by far the most abundant and satisfactory fruits were gathered in connection with the ministry of faithful pastors. The hard, anxious toil of winter, spring, and summer was past, and when the harvest with its whitened fields was come, the two trusty reapers appeared. The Master had bidden them; His set time had arrived, and His servants were ready. Let men who see no farther than natural causes say what they will; they who see both the natural and the spiritual will say, "It is the doing of the Lord, and wondrous in our eyes." "The wind bloweth where it listeth." The breath of the Eternal is gloriously sovereign and free. The work is His: His in its purpose, its beginning, its progress, and its outcome.

What, it may be asked, is the secret of the power and success of these men? Apart from the sovereign will of God, there is no secret, save the secret that is known to every God-sent minister of the gospel, to every Christian worker that is baptized with the Holy Ghost, and to every soul born again. There is nothing in the men themselves, nothing in their message, and nothing in their methods, to account for the remarkable results that have attended their labours. These results are to be accounted for only by admitting the fact of the agency of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised to send the Comforter, and "when He is come," said the Lord, "He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." Christ has fulfilled that promise. He has given the Holy Spirit, and we see that compassionate and gentle Friend of sinners putting forth His power, convincing and converting many, revealing Jesus to them to their unspeakable joy. When the Spirit thus reveals the Saviour, human agency occupies a humble place. The Master is everywhere, the servant nowhere. This is both a sign and a secret of the blessing. When the Lord in

great mercy is passing by every eye is fixed on Him : then Jesus is seen, "Jesus only." Christ is thus lifted up, and all men are drawn unto Him.

"What means this eager, anxious throng,
Which moves with busy haste along—
These wondrous gatherings day by day?
What means this strange commotion, pray?
In accents hushed the throng reply,
'Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.'

"Ho! all ye heavy-laden, come!
Here's pardon, comfort, rest, and home;
Ye wanderers from a Father's face,
Return, accept His proffered grace;
Ye tempted ones, there's refuge nigh:
'Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.'"



CHAPTER V.

THE WORK IN THE CITIES.

"He beheld the city, and wept over it."—LUKE xix. 41.

GREAT cities have always played an important part in the history of nations. Modern cities seem destined to outstrip in many respects the cities of the past. For population, commerce, wealth, rapidity of growth, and influence both for good and evil, they already surpass the great municipal communities of every former age. To their growth, already gigantic, there appears to be no limit, unless it be the exhaustion of natural resources or the fearful alternative of utter overthrow through their own exceeding corruption. Modern cities may be said to be at once the palaces and the dungeons of civilization. Within their fostering bosoms lie the most vigorous springs of good and the most infernal maelstroms of evil. That the good in them will overcome the evil is, it is to be feared, as yet problematical. It is the bounden duty of the Church of Christ, as it is her wisdom, to devote her most assiduous efforts to the evangelization of our city populations. For this end the purifying, and stimulating of vital religion in our great urban centres is of the last importance. The world is fast coming to consist of so many huge cities; and in them is to be fought the great battle betwixt light and darkness. The soldiers of Christianity, not less than the warriors of ancient Israel, are

summoned to "play the men for the cities of their God." The heart of the Church is in the cities. Pour into these many-arteried centres fresh tides of energy, and the pulse of life will beat more vigorously in all the extremities. This was the course followed by the great apostle of the Gentiles. Succeeding evangelists in every age have adopted a similar plan. Seeing that our cities are at once the world's broad market-place and the Church's high platform, the American evangelists have only followed the dictate of common sense in copying the example of Paul. This course, moreover, has been clearly sealed with the blessing from above.

Landing at Liverpool in June, 1873, Messrs. Moody and Sankey purposed beginning work there. But the great seaport was not prepared, and did not recognize them. Liverpool, *prepared* in 1875, spent thousands of pounds in aid of their work. Meanwhile they proceeded to York. Here they laboured for a short space, and gathered some fruit. But the corn beneath the shadow of the proud minster was still green, and the reapers, sharpening their sickles on the grindstone *Failure*, sought a ripper field. This they found at Sunderland, where they conducted services for several weeks with many tokens of blessing. In Victoria Hall thousands assembled to hear them, many being attracted no doubt by the novelty of "singing the gospel." But whether preached or sung, the gospel began to fall upon the ears of many with somewhat of its ancient power, and considerable numbers at the close of each service assembled in Bethesda Chapel for enquiry and prayer. Here began to be witnessed those touching incidents, the very narration of which carried blessing to many hearts, and prepared the way of the gospel in many other places. At a meeting for enquirers in Bethesda Chapel a young man, who had long played the part of the prodigal son, to the great grief of his godly parents, evidently moved by penitential sorrow for his sins, came up the aisle to his father and mother. Throwing his arms around his father's neck,

he asked his forgiveness with many tears. Then turning to his mother, he in like manner embraced her tenderly, entreating her also to forgive him. He afterwards took his younger brother in his arms, and kissed him. No wonder that the father and mother and newly-returned prodigal, with his brother, were obliged to retire to the vestry, being quite overcome. A voice seemed to say, "This my son was dead, but is alive again; he was lost, and is found." When a sinner tastes the forgiving love of God in Jesus Christ, and is reconciled to the great Father in heaven, the deepest fountains of the heart are unsealed, and the affections begin to flow afresh in their natural channels. There is nothing begets love to man like the love of God.

From Sunderland the evangelists went to Newcastle, in the month of August. Not very long before an "advanced" teacher had been counselling the inhabitants of this busy town, in effect, to curtail their praying, and narrow the limits of their faith in God. The advice was scarcely wanted; certainly it was not followed. Curiously enough, the counsel to pray *less* was followed by a loud call to pray *more*, addressed by two men who were almost as great strangers in the stirring town on the banks of the Tyne as Jonah was in Nineveh. This sequence of events seemed to be specially providential, for the call was responded to by a multitude, whose prayers were answered in the manifest opening of the windows of heaven. Clearly, wisdom was justified rather in the simple faith of the laymen than in the doubts of the gowned lecturer.

In Newcastle the work assumed a more definite shape, and larger proportions. Here especially began to be experienced that singular melting of hearts in prayer that has so strikingly characterised the movement in its entire course, and has turned many a great meeting in the three kingdoms into a Bethel, a Bochim, and a Peniel. Here too began to be witnessed those scenes of penitential sorrow, of fervent yet calm enquiry, and of

joyful entrance into the liberty of the sons of God, that has found an everlasting memorial in the souls of thousands. Like the dew in the evening, like the manna in the wilderness, the blessing fell softly at those meetings for prayer and enquiry, where indeed the more spiritual and lasting part of the work was wrought.

Besides the evangelistic services conducted in John Knox (Presbyterian) Church, and in the Baptist Church, a daily prayer meeting was established in the Music Hall, where from two to three hundred persons met to pray for the revival of God's work. At first unfavourable comments were made. "Newcastle is too irreligious a place," it was said, "for daily prayer-meetings or revival work to prosper in." So it seemed in the wisdom of men; but soon the result showed that such was not also the mind of God. Many remarkable answers to prayer were experienced; striking conversions occurred; gradually the community began largely to be moved; and by-and-by it came to be noised abroad that the Spirit of God was working in a manner too obvious to be gainsayed. Special services and meetings for prayer were held in the Tyne Theatre and other places; many became deeply concerned about the salvation of their relatives; many others were burdened about their own salvation; and cases of conversion came to be of frequent occurrence.

"Oh, sir, for God's sake come in," said a woman to a gentleman who was passing along a street in Gateshead, and whose attention was attracted by her knocking at the window. "Come in, sir, and tell me something about Jesus, for I am wretched."

"What is the matter?" said the passer-by.

"I am lost," she replied. "Oh, tell me what I must do to be saved? I have been standing at my window all the day to see if a Christian would come along, and if it had only been a beggar, who loved the Saviour, I would have called him in."

She had been at a meeting a week before, and her anxiety had now reached a culminating point. Not long after, her darkness and trouble gave way to light and peace.

On September 10th the evangelists held their first all-day meeting. It was reckoned a novelty, and doubts as to its success were freely expressed even by the friends of the work. It did not fail; on the contrary, a very marked blessing attended the whole service of the day. Ryehill Chapel, the spacious building where the meeting was held, was completely filled during some of the hours, many having come from Shields, from Sunderland, from Jarrow, or other towns, to join with the Christians of Newcastle in this happy fellowship. Like the many other meetings of a similar character that have since been held in the great cities, it was refreshing in the highest degree, and full of that genuine spiritual enthusiasm that always marks a "white day" in the history of a believer, or of a Christian community. In its own measure the "all-day meeting" is a testimony to the value of true religion. It is not without good cause that in the busy centres of the world, in an age when material things are not less engrossing than idol-worship, men and women should abandon home, and field, and office, and workshop, to spend not merely the *golden*, but gold-making hours of the day, in praise and prayer, and in reading the Word of God, and conferring on the work of grace. It was like one of the feast-days of ancient Israel, or like one of the solemn, happy days observed in the Highlands of Scotland. Our Scottish fast-days, observed in connection with our sacramental communion seasons, would stand less in danger than they do of being abrogated or of dying out, if they were conducted somewhat after the pattern of the all-day meeting, with its edifying variety and freshness, and well-planned, business-like procedure.

The more striking circumstance of the work at Newcastle was that it seemed to ring the great bell of heaven by calling the attention of the godly throughout the land, and summoning

Christians to prayers in a spirit of awakened expectancy, and a feeling as of something remarkable about to happen.

Various towns in the North of England were visited, and in all of them more or less impression was made. In most instances, however, those visits were much too brief to admit of large, tangible, or abiding results, especially where the soil was not thoroughly prepared beforehand, or the seed sown was not well "harrowed-in" afterwards. "In some places," said Mr. Moody, "the work seemed all of a sudden to blaze up to Heaven, and all of a sudden it seemed to die out again. Much depends," he shrewdly added, "on the pains taken by the ministers to prepare the way, and then to follow it up afterwards. If this is not done, it is lost."

Edinburgh was reached on the 22nd November, 1873. The way in which the steps of the two men, evidently called of God to be chief workers at this time, were directed to the ripened field of labour in the Scottish metropolis, demands a sentence or two. Long before Edinburgh had dreamt of the matter, the evangelists had promised their services for Dundee, having been invited by the Young Men's Christian Association of this town through their esteemed president, Mr. David Robertson. From Newcastle they should have proceeded to fulfil their engagement on the banks of the Tay, but for what appears in the light of subsequent events to have been a providential re-arrangement of their plans. If we do not misinterpret events, it seemed good to the Master that His work in this instance should begin at Edinburgh. We can now see what ends were thus to be served. This city was in a high degree spiritually prepared, and in other respects was pre-eminently fitted to be the fountain of a revival stream whose healing waters should overspread the land with blessing. If the brightest Christian intelligence in the country acknowledged fresh light, if the people least likely to be moved by mere novelty or excitement* were bowing beneath the power of God through the instrumentality of the simplest exhortations

addressed by unlettered brethren, if the churches in the enjoyment of the choicest privileges were receiving a Pentecostal baptism of the Spirit purely by means of united prayer, such an unusual phenomenon might well impress and arouse Christians and churches throughout the land. Such, in fact, was the result. In the quickening of Christians and in the conversion of sinners, the revival in Edinburgh doubtless produced results of great value to the cause of Christ in that city. But many and precious though these fruits were, they are scarcely to be named in comparison with the effect produced upon religion throughout the land and world, when tidings of the work of grace in the metropolis were noised abroad.

The revival in the Scottish capital awoke the country. It was the great heart of a vital movement, whose strong pulses were felt at the ends of the earth. That was its chief virtue, its use, its glory. The rapidity with which it developed itself; the breadth, intensity, and power which it acquired in a few weeks; the calmness and dignity characterising its course,—were wholly unexpected, and took the world by surprise. It was the first shot, the firing of a signal gun, at the sound of which a great host stood to arms. It was the raising of a royal standard on a central eminence, at the sight of which a myriad loyal hearts bestirred themselves to prepare for the King's approach.

Mr. Kelman, minister of Free St. John's Church, Leith, whose efforts in the good cause were so indefatigable and well-directed, learning from his brother, who had witnessed the awakening at Newcastle, the true character of the movement, was so deeply impressed that he could find no rest until he visited the scene of the work, and examined it for himself. The features by which on previous information he had been most struck, assumed still greater prominence under personal observation. The incisive and trenchant preaching of Moody, together with the intelligent and impressive singing of the gospel by Sankey, seemed to produce the most satisfactory spiritual

results, for the blessing of God in the gracious operation of the Spirit obviously rested on the work. Having asked and received the promise of the evangelists to visit Edinburgh, he returned home, and in conjunction with Mr. J. H. Wilson, minister of Barclay Church, proceeded to enlist the aid and sympathy of the other ministers of the city. Some lent cordial assistance, others hesitated and hung back. Of these latter it is well known some, as soon as they perceived evidence of the gracious work of the Holy Ghost, threw themselves into the movement, and nobly redeemed their previous hesitancy and doubt. It is due to truth to observe here that the union of ministers and churches in the work was not so extensive as could have been desired. While the churches generally were represented, some more, some less fully,—and while, in the case of all who did unite, the spirit of love and harmony was perfect, presenting a striking and beautiful spectacle,—there were ministers and churches that stood wholly aloof, some in a haughty spirit of indifference, and others in utter dislike or scorn. This remark unhappily bears with equal force on other places. For while the movement brought to light the fact that vital religion in this country is growing both in purity and in power, it also revealed the nakedness of the land, in the heartless formalism that obtains in some religious communities, and the blind, proud antipathy to the gospel that is fostered in others.

In preparation for the visit of the evangelists a prayer-meeting was held once a week in the Craigie Hall for some time, and afterwards daily in the Upper Queen Street Hall. In point of fact, the awakening began here. Such was the conscious nearness of God, such the sense of divine help in prayer, such and so manifest the answers vouchsafed, such the blending of hearts in unity and love, and such the deep solemnity that rested on the meetings day by day, that those who attended say it formed one of the most memorable periods of life to them. "Truly," they said one to another, "if we see no more revival than what

we have seen here, if we obtain no more blessing than what we have enjoyed in this meeting, we are, in the abounding grace of God, a thousandfold rewarded for this union in prayer." One thing characterised the exercises in this meeting, and in fact also the entire course of the movement in the metropolis; that one thing was a predominant feeling of dread lest any idolatrous trust should be placed in "the arm of flesh," any undue stress should be laid on the anticipated visit and services of the American brethren. This wise and wholesome fear, glorifying to God, found expression in almost every prayer or speech. Where such a spirit prevails, the blessing is already given, the good work is begun.

The inhabitants of the Scottish capital are credited with the possession of large intelligence. Enjoying as they do educational and religious advantages of the highest order, it is believed that the people of that city are well able to judge of truth and error, and to discriminate between the gospel and what is no gospel at all. Be that as it may, thousands flocked together to hear the two strangers. Great numbers came from the surrounding country for the same purpose. Day after day for months crowds gathered at noon in the Free Assembly Hall for prayer. The deepest solemnity and awe rested on the people. Prayer was not only offered but answered. Sometimes ere the hour had expired, often before the day was done, gracious and striking answers to prayer were received. A mighty power was obviously at work; what was it but the power of God? Multitudes of all classes, from the highest to the lowest, attended the various services, noon, afternoon, and night. Many were converted. Students, sceptics, prodigal sons, drunkards, persons of every type of character, and of all ages and ranks, sought the Lord and found Him. Some went to the meetings from curiosity, and, like Zaccheus in the sycamore tree, they unexpectedly heard the voice of Jesus calling them to Himself. Some went to scoff and remained to pray. Many went with trembling

hearts, fearful lest Jesus should pass them by, and came away rejoicing, being enabled to say—

“I’ve found the Pearl of greatest price,
My heart doth sing for joy;
And sing I must, a Christ I have,
Oh, what a Christ have I!”

Some, who thought their sins were too great to be forgiven, or that their day of grace had come to a close, obtained new light, and finding that the door of mercy was still open for them, were enabled to enter in and rest in Him whose blood cleanseth from all sin. Well might such sing—

“Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away.”*

“Edinburgh is now enjoying signal manifestations of grace,” it is said in the “Appeal for Prayer” sent to all the ministers of Scotland by the most eminent citizens, pastors, and professors in the capital. “Many of the Lord’s people are not surprised at this. In October and November last they met from time to time to pray for it. They hoped that they might have a visit from Messrs. Moody and Sankey, of America; but they very earnestly besought the Lord that He would deliver them from depending upon them, or on any instrumentality, and that He Himself would come with them, or come before them. He has graciously answered that prayer, and His own presence is now wonderfully manifested, and is felt to be among them. God is so affecting the hearts of men, that the Free Church Assembly Hall, the largest public building in Edinburgh, is crowded every day at noon with a meeting for prayer; and that building, along with the Established Church Assembly Hall, overflows every evening when the gospel is preached. But the numbers that attend are not the most remarkable feature. It is the presence and the

* A full account of the work in Edinburgh, from the able pen of Mrs. Barbour, appeared in *The Christian*, while testimony was borne to it by such men as Dr. Thomson, Dr. Bonar, Dr. Charteris, Dr. Blaikie, and other writers in the newspapers and in various periodicals.

power of the Holy Ghost, the solemn awe, the prayerful, believing, expectant spirit, the anxious inquiry of unsaved souls, and the longing of believers to grow more like Christ—their hungering and thirsting after holiness. The hall of the Tolbooth Church, and the Free High Church, are nightly attended by anxious inquirers. All denominational and social distinctions are entirely merged. All this is of the God of grace.

. . . . "If the country will thus fall on their knees, the God who has filled our national history with the wonders of His love will come again, and surprise even the strongest believers with the unprecedented tokens of His grace."

Among other meetings of an unusually interesting character was the watch-night service held in the Free Assembly Hall on the 31st December. So intensely solemn were the proceedings of that evening that many were unable to suppress their emotion, and not a few will doubtless remember its hours of high communion while they have any being. Some present on that occasion have gone their way, and joined another company of worshippers and holy watchers, where they celebrate the coming in of a more glorious year. Maggie Lindsay found Jesus that night, and in less than a month was, as so many know, suddenly taken home with the words on her dying lips—

"Oh, depth of mercy! can it be
That gate was left ajar for me?
For me! for me!
Was left ajar for me?"

And William Arnot, the well-known gifted minister of the Free High Church, has also joined "the glorious band." Shortly before the clock struck twelve on that memorable watch-night, Mr. Arnot, alluding to the glory of heaven, said, "Grandeur still! Come up higher. I even I, an atom, will take part in the up-bringing of the Saviour's joy.

"Shall we meet beyond the river,
Where the surges cease to roll?"

That noble voice is now hushed on earth, that faithful watchman has gone up higher.

The Convention on Wednesday, January 14th, 1874, held in the Free Assembly Hall, was of great use not only in bringing into one focus all the light and warmth of the movement, but also in preparing the way for its extension throughout the country. Many ministers and other Christian workers from the provinces attended the meetings of convention, and on returning home carried with them glowing embers of the fire that was burning so brightly in the capital.

It is not easy to estimate the full value of the work in Edinburgh. The great outstanding fact of the revival is itself no small gain to the Church of Christ there: it is a memory that must influence her future for good; a stepping-stone to a purer, nobler, happier course. The very remembrance of the daily prayer-meeting, with its great crowd of worshippers bowing at the footstool of God in the sweetly-solemn consciousness of the immediate presence of the Hearer of prayer, will be to thousands as a treasured jewel, nay, as a passport to higher blessing. Many to their dying day will recall with fresh upspringing joy and faith how they were enabled to pray with a most rare assurance, and how their hearts were like to burst with a desire to give thanks for blessing then and there received. Who can forget the multitude of inquirers, with their faces turned Zionward, weeping as they went? Or the sight of so many young believers overflowing with the joy of first love? Or the testimony of parents, teachers, and pastors, who could not conceal their gladness on seeing the suddenly-gathered fruit of their labours and prayers? Or that most unexpected result, the entrance of desponding Christians into the full light of assurance?—for somehow the Fearings and Much-afraids had suddenly become as bold as lions. And many will bear with them for ever the pleasant impression of incidents illustrative of the too-much-forgotten fact, that the Lord of providence and the God of grace are one

and the same Lord. All this and much more will be to many a holy, fragrant memory, full of comfort and good fruits.

As far as the Church is concerned, results sufficiently definite may be put down as follows :

1. More joy and strength in Christian life.
2. More faith in God and in His Word.
3. Greater desire to convey the glad tidings to others.
4. The strengthening of the Church by an increase of living members.
5. The improved quality of her membership, the young converts being distinguished by joyfulness, willingness to be taught, and readiness to work.
6. The consequent brightening of the Church's prospect for the immediate future.

Doubtless, the genteel formalism, the frigid conventionalism, the devout adherence to ruts, that so much cramped the religion of our Scottish Athens, are in some measure displaced by a freer and more genial spirit. A powerful impulse has been communicated to Christian work in every form. More extended in its scope, it is also more intensified in its spirit and more definite in its aims. Conversion in the view of many, to whom previously it was little more than a doctrine, stands out as a palpable, unquestionable reality. Scepticism has been rebuked. Rationalism has been checked. Worldliness has been diminished. And while hundreds of souls have been saved, the revival in that city has given a fresh impulse and an elevated tone to the work of God throughout the land. If the movement in Newcastle was the ringing of the bell of heaven for Edinburgh, the work of grace in our proud capital was the ringing of the same great bell for Scotland, aye and other lands; for, doubtless, it aroused the attention and quickened the life of Christians and churches in all parts of the earth.

Before proceeding further north the evangelists paid a visit to Berwick-upon-Tweed, and held meetings here with remarkable

tokens of blessing. The special services were taken up by Dr. John Cairns, and other ministers, and carried on for weeks with great energy and success.

On 21st January, 1874, they began work in Dundee, where they laboured for two and a half weeks. About a year afterwards the following survey of the work here, to which little need to be added, was given to the public by the present writer :

“The year that has just passed away has been a good year in Dundee. For spiritual blessing we have seen no year like it since 1860. About seven years ago there was an awakening in several congregations here, precious fruits of which still abound. But that movement was confined to four or five churches, while the revival of last year was on a much more extended scale.

“It is pleasant to recall in thought with what hopeful, cheering signs 1874 dawned upon us in this town. Glad tidings of the work of grace in Edinburgh thrilled every Christian heart. The spirit of grace and supplication was being poured out upon us. Every little praying circle was stirred. Ministers, office-bearers, Christian workers of every class, and others, were meeting for united prayer. Some were praying and waiting; some were longing and hoping; whilst others were full of a spirit of expectancy that rose to assurance. Many felt that the Lord was very near. They seemed to hear the solemn and heart-moving echoes of His footsteps in the sanctuary. They were sure that a blessing was at hand.

“Nor were they disappointed. The blessing, in fact, had already in measure been given—in the power to continue in fervent prayer, in the liberty and boldness of wrestling intercession, and in the full assurance of expected answers. Here and there, in several congregations, the beginnings of a gracious work were apparent, and whole fields were ripe. On the 21st of January the American brethren, with their well-sharpened sickles, appeared on the field; and although their stay was

limited to two and a half weeks, they were beyond all question employed by the Master in reaping an abundant harvest.

"We have not time to speak of the daily prayer-meeting during those weeks, with its deep solemnity, its hallowed tenderness, its answered petitions, its songs of joy and triumph, and its other fragrant memories. Nor would our space admit of an adequate description of the evangelistic services, with their wonderful crowds, their mingled enthusiasm and calmness, the impression too powerful to be concealed, the awakening of many souls, the silent tears, and the sudden turning of the gay, the thoughtless, the wayward, and the worldly-minded to the Lord. We cannot even linger on the work among the inquirers—a work more full of interest to the churches, of lessons to Christian workers, of edifying instruction to saints, and of importance to the cause of true religion, than many are aware of. It is impossible to forget the scenes witnessed in the inquiry-room—the patient efforts of the workers, the struggles of awakened souls battling with doubt and unbelief, the dawning, sometimes sudden and sometimes gradual, of light on the minds of benighted inquirers, the joy of unexpected deliverance, the exuberance of first love, and the songs of gratitude and praise. At such moments nothing came more readily to the thoughts, or more suitably to the lips, than the song of the ancient Church—

"When Zion's bondage God turned back,
As men that dreamed were we;
Then filled with laughter was our mouth,
Our tongue with melody.

"They 'mong the heathen said, The Lord
Great things for them hath wrought.
The Lord hath done great things for us,
Whence joy to us is brought."

From the inquiry-room there were many, we cannot doubt, who, as they went home, were enabled to say for the first time—

"Happy day, happy day!
When Jesus washed my sins away."

"At the end of the two and a half weeks, upwards of four hundred persons applied for 'young converts' tickets,' professing, as they deliberately and solemnly did, to have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Besides these there were others not a few, chiefly middle-aged and elderly persons, who, while they joyfully professed to having received the Saviour in the first embrace of faith, did not see their way to enrol themselves among the young converts. There was also a considerable number of persons from the country who were converted at this time, but are not included in the above list. Usually those who come great distances to hear the Word on such occasions are the first to receive a blessing. They come thirsting for salvation, and they are not sent empty away. We remember many pleasing and some very striking instances of that kind. Some there were who came from the South of England to attend the meetings in Dundee; and they think they have good grounds for believing that the busy town on the north bank of the Tay has become their second birthplace, a spot to be held by them in everlasting remembrance.

"On Messrs. Moody and Sankey leaving Dundee, evangelistic services were held in various churches, with many tokens of blessing. The number of enquirers was very considerable. Many cases we then saw were characterized by deep conviction of sin, and there were several remarkable conversions. Of the many hundreds that were conversed with, doubtless some were only slightly impressed, while others are bearing about their trouble to this day. For whatever may be the explanation, there are always some who very slowly and gradually arrive at settled trust and peace in Christ. As the result of the awakening, there have been large additions to the membership of the churches—in some congregations as many as one hundred and upwards.

"On the occasion of the second visit of the evangelists to Dundee, in June, when great open-air meetings were held in the Barrack Park, Mr. Moody organized and set agoing special means and efforts for reaching young men. With the aid of a large

staff of earnest Christian men, who volunteered their services at the call of Mr. Moody, the Young Men's Association carried out the scheme with energy and success. In the course of two weeks upwards of one hundred and thirty young men were individually conversed with, almost the whole of whom ultimately professed faith in Christ. The work has been carried on throughout the year by the Association, as well as by the direct instrumentality of the churches, with much prayer and pains, and many have been added to the Lord. In the Post and Telegraph Offices alone there are some twenty young men and lads who have come over to the Lord's side, and are zealous in His service. As Andrew found his brother Simon, and brought him to Jesus, so in many a pleasing instance brothers have been bringing brothers, and young men have been bringing their companions, to the Saviour. The seal of God's blessing has been clearly stamped on the efforts of the Christian young men. And although, to the eye of an observer looking only on the surface, nothing may be apparent save the ordinary ripple of Christian work, to those who look more closely a powerful under-current of spiritual influence is plainly seen to be at work among the youth of our town. In many quarters the tide is fairly turned, and is setting in steadily in the right direction; and we feel encouraged to expect still greater and better things.

"In regard to the work among the children, suffice it to say, we have never before seen so much precious fruit in the same space of time. All the year round there has been great joy in many a family and in many a Sabbath-school. Nor has this joy proved to be evanescent or fruitless. To this fact parents and teachers bear decided testimony. Running parallel with the work of the Holy Ghost, there has been a remarkable dispensation of Providence in the removal of many little ones to the spirit-world. Beautiful and instructive in many instances have been the last solemn scenes of life. To the clear eye of a child's faith there is scarcely any darkness in the valley. To the ear of

the little Christian, quick to catch voices from above, the solemn sound of Jordan's waters has no terrors. With marvellous wisdom and force these dying children gave forth their testimony to Jesus and His grace.

"While the immediate results of the work are exceedingly precious, the value of its full outcome can scarcely be over-estimated. Believers are refreshed and lifted higher. Christian workers of every class, having renewed their strength, are filled with fresh hope and zeal. The whole body of the living Church has made an advance; her forces are increased; her methods are improved. So mighty an impulse cannot fail of great and lasting results. But there remains much land to be possessed, and from the recent movement there comes to us a loud and stirring call to go forward. Thanking God for the past, and taking courage, we look into the future with heart of good cheer; for we feel assured, 'Tis better on before.'"

To this little needs to be added. The outcome of the work, so far, has assumed the most satisfactory form among the young men. Not only has the interest not died away, but it is steadily growing. Meetings held by the young men for the special benefit of their own class are attended by constantly increasing numbers, and some of the youths of the town are being brought to the Saviour week by week. The Young Men's Christian Association, one of the most lively and flourishing institutions of the kind, is carrying on, under the earnest and indefatigable leadership of its office-bearers, assisted by ministers of the town, special evangelistic services for the general public every Sabbath night. At no time during the last eighteen months have those meetings been without marked indications of blessing. Many of the young men, and other men converted within the last two years, are now taking part in Sabbath-school teaching and Christian work generally; some of them, of a high order of gifts as well as of lofty characters, have been advanced to offices in the Church; while others are quietly pursuing a course of study,

in classes provided for that purpose, with a view to service in some one of its many branches in the vineyard of the Lord.

Leaving Dundee the evangelists went to Glasgow, and began their work there in the City Hall on the morning of Sabbath, the 8th February. The cloud of blessing had gone before them, cases of awakening and conversion having occurred through the reports of the Lord's work in other places. According to their usual practice, their first meeting was specially designed for Christian workers, of whom three thousand were present. To begin the campaign by enlisting the Lord's host is wise policy; and so mighty an army, not of raw recruits, but of valorous and tried soldiers of the cross, many of them doubtless veterans in the service of Christ, gathered under one leader, was itself a foretoken of victory. "Some of the ministers," says Dr. Andrew A. Bonar, "were in a certain way witnesses of the effect produced, teacher after teacher coming into Church just as the bells ceased, with happy, thoughtful, solemn faces."

Again, there were vast crowds, deep solemnity, immediate answers to prayer, whole masses "seemingly moved and bent down under the truth," and many inquiring the way of life. In some of the meetings for men only, marvellous power attended the word, and large numbers were found in deep anxiety of soul, many of whom were enabled to receive Jesus in the inquiry-room, and went home rejoicing.

The most striking feature of the work in Glasgow was the movement among the young men. It began in Ewing Place Chapel on the evening of the 24th of February, when, after addresses by a deputation of four young men from Edinburgh, and by Dr. Cairns, Berwick, Rev. J. H. Wilson, Barclay Church, and Mr. Moody, one hundred and one came forward in a state of anxiety. Next night, in the same place of meeting, some nine or ten hundred young men assembled, of whom one hundred and forty remained to be conversed with, not a few coming into the

light and hope of the gospel ere the work of the evening closed. One young man, who had recently come from Ireland, was on his way to the theatre that Tuesday night, but somehow he was turned from his purpose, and entering Ewing Place Chapel, was found of Him whom he had not sought. Great was his joy as he returned home, all thoughts of the world's amusements being banished from his heart. Another of the "one hundred and one," though a Sabbath-school teacher, being convinced that he lacked the one thing needful, was enabled to enter into the experience of salvation at the same time. A third, a student, made to feel on the same occasion that Christian work was no substitute for Christ, took his place among the anxious. No fewer than five of the workers, who spoke to him in succession, unwittingly quoted the same Scripture, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath* everlasting life." (John v. 24.) He was at length enabled to receive the truth in the faith of Jesus. Another, who had been seeking Christ a long time, was unable to answer Mr. Moody, when, taking him by the hand, the evangelist asked him if he would take the Saviour *now*. But his heart said, "Yes," and he took his place among the decided.

The details of this movement among the young men would fill a volume. Youths of every grade of society, and of every shade of moral character, from the respectable Christian worker down to the most debased profligate, have been turned to Christ. Young men, who had turned their backs on their father's house and on the house of God, have been recovered by the strong, loving hand of the Spirit of grace. Youths who had gone the round of all sinful pleasures were suddenly snatched as brands from the fire. Some who had been the slaves of vice, the very drudges of the devil, were rescued from the jaws of hell by the omnipotent arm of the Saviour.

That this work is real and permanent time has already shown; and it is still in progress. "This very week," writes Dr. Andrew

A. Bonar, in a note dated June 29th, 1875, "I have heard of three remarkable cases of conversion among the young men in the neighbourhood of our church, and this is nothing uncommon." Many of these converted youths, upwards of a hundred of the first-fruits of the movement, not to speak of results subsequent to the visit of the American brethren, volunteered for Christian work, at home or abroad, in official capacity or otherwise, as God in His providence might lead them, and are in the course of being trained with that end in view. And perhaps not the least important result of the awakening among the young men of Glasgow was the marvellous effect produced by the report of it throughout Scotland and other lands. The effect on the minds of pious parents in town and country was unlike anything witnessed in our time, and the result in the conversion of young men throughout the land was still more remarkable. It was clearly the outstretching of the almighty arm, and could only be contemplated, by men who study closely the works of the Holy Spirit, with mingled feelings of wonder, joy, and praise.

The Convention held on the 16th of April, in the Kibble Crystal Palace, where some five thousand persons, including ministers and office-bearers of churches both in Glasgow and various other towns and cities, and people of every class, were gathered together, served at once to reveal the breadth and intensity of the movement, and to impart a fresh impulse to it. It is touching to reflect that some of the noblest sons of Scotland, that day present, have since passed away. Dr. Robert Buchanan, who opened the convention with prayer, in which he, after grateful acknowledgment of the recent blessing and work of the Spirit, offered fervent supplication that "this might be only a beginning," has reached the eternal home. Dr. Fairbairn, Principal of the Free Church College, has also entered into rest. That great scholar and theologian delivered the first address, giving his testimony to the work in strong and

striking terms. As he valued all he possessed now, and all he hoped for in the world to come, he said he dared not lift a finger against the movement, for he firmly believed that it was the work of the living God. Such a movement helps forward an evangelical ministry mightily, drawing ministers near to the Lord, the great source and fountain, quickening them and encouraging them in the conviction that in the word of the gospel they have a living instrument in their hands. It is only a soul feeling grace that is fitted to make others feel; and such a soul cannot rest in a mere outward ministry. Such movements too affect the matter of preaching, for ministers are thus led to lay greater stress on the doctrines on which we may expect the Spirit of God to send blessing. The great doctrines the Spirit had sealed were these: 1. A living, personal, holy God, who is also our Judge. 2. An atoning Saviour. 3. Free and full salvation to sinners of every degree. 4. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit and the Word unto newness of life. None of these doctrines are taught by the "advanced thinkers" of our day; but these are the doctrines of the Word of God, and in all revival work these are employed by the Holy Spirit. Eliminate these doctrines, and Christianity becomes a mere philosophy, and ceases to be a religion.

Such in meagre outline was the substance of what may be almost termed the dying testimony of that great and good man, Dr. Fairbairn. It was his last public service. But a few weeks had come and gone when he ceased from his labours, and literally, as well as figuratively, slept his last sleep; for in slumbers as soft as those of infancy he breathed his last.

The closing services of the evangelists, held in the Kibble Palace, were attended by vast multitudes, as many as from twenty to twenty-five thousand being assembled on one occasion. The magnificent opportunities for preaching Christ, with which God in His providence was thus signally favouring the American brethren, were seized by them with suitable boldness

and skill in the fervid exhortations of the one, and the impressive songs of the other.

Apart from the immediate outcome of the movement in Glasgow, in the numerous conversions that have taken place, the impulse communicated to Christian work must prove to be of incalculable value. In the pastorate, in the Sabbath-school and children's service, in the mission work, and in a myriad of families, the refreshed and joyful labourers have given themselves anew, and with bounding energy and hope, each to the task assigned them by the Master. Many special efforts have been set on foot, such as the theatre services and the work in the tent. This last-named enterprise of Christian philanthropy, the free breakfast for the abject poor, has enjoyed the signal blessing of Him who is merciful to rich and poor, and turns no deaf ear to the ravens when they cry. Reserving for another chapter a more specific account of this good work, a single instance may be here given, as showing how the wretched and the miserable thus receive blessing. At the close of the breakfast, writes Dr. Bonar, and after the address, a young lady noticed a man pacing slowly up and down along the side of the tent, his face indicating that he was uneasy and anxious. She went up to him, and asked him if he was a Christian. "No; but I'm going to be," he said hurriedly; "but no just yet, I'm no just ready."

"But now is the accepted time," she replied, "and you may be called into eternity at any moment."

"Oh, but I will be a Christian yet," said he; "yes, I will; but I'm no just ready. I'll think about it; I'll think about it."

The lady again said that the first thing he was asked to do was to receive Christ. Just at that moment, one who had overheard the conversation stepped up and told the man of a woman who had been at the tent one Sabbath morning and left it intending to return at noon, but dropped dead by the way. The man

seemed much impressed by the incident, and the lady again urged him to receive Christ at once. In his hurried way he replied, "But I must work, I must do something. Don't tell me that I can be saved without doing anything." As he was saying this, a little boy (of about eleven years of age), who had been seeking out a passage in his Bible, touched the lady, and holding the Bible open, said, "Please, read that to him." It was Rom. iv. 5, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." The lady read it. The man listened most attentively, and after a little exclaimed, "It's a fact; God says it! *To him that worketh not.*" The word entered his soul; and after some more conversation, he grasped the lady's hand, and said, "Why, I never saw anybody so earnest as you! I'll thank you all the days of my life!"

From Glasgow the evangelists proceeded to visit various towns in the south-west of Scotland—Paisley, Greenock, Ayr, Irvine, Kilmarnock, Dumbarton, and other places. Nor were important centres further north, as Stirling and Perth, overlooked. These visits were for the most part too brief for producing very large results; but many came hungering and thirsting for the word, believers were refreshed, anxious ones were relieved, workers were stimulated, ministers were encouraged, churches were strengthened, and the kingdom of God was advanced.

A second visit was paid to Dundee in June, when large open-air meetings were held in the Barrack Park, and a remarkable movement among the young men was begun, the force of which, so far from being spent, is even now giving signs of increasing vitality and power.

Aberdeen,* and most of the northern towns, were next visited, Mr. Moody going as far as John o' Groat's House, the most

* Previous to the visit of the American evangelists to Aberdeen, a harvest of souls was reaped there by Mr. C. Daniels and other agents of the Scottish Evangelistic Association.

northerly point of Scotland, where he addressed a meeting in the midst of the usual signs of interest and impression. To speak of the work in its details at the Granite City, Peterhead, Huntley, Banff, Keith, Elgin, Inverness, Tain, Wick, Thurso, and the towns further south, such as Brechin, Montrose, Arbroath, is not within the scope of our present design. In all these places there was evidently more or less preparation, prayer, and expectancy, and doubtless more or less blessing. In particular, very remarkable blessing was enjoyed at Tain and Elgin. Many of the earnest pastors, following up the work of the American brethren with special evangelistic effort, have reaped fruit in some degree proportionate to their own fidelity and zeal. In some localities the impetus given to the work of Christ is scarcely yet abated; the higher elevation reached is still maintained; and over all that region the summer of 1874 was a season of spiritual refreshing, the remembrance of which will fade only with the memories of living men.

Early in September the evangelists crossed the Channel, and began their work at Belfast on the morning of Sabbath, the sixth of that month. In anticipation of their visit much prayer had been offered, and the warm heart of Ulster was beating in full sympathy with the object of the strangers' visit, and in high expectancy of blessing from above. Such praying and such expectation seem never to be disappointed. It is the finger of God touching the secret spring of faith, which in turn touches the secret spring by which the windows of heaven are opened. Very speedily the work in Belfast assumed the very character and almost the proportions of the movement in Glasgow. The genial Irish nature leaped up in cordial, responsive impulses to the heart-moving words of the preacher, whilst the melodies of the singer seemed to make the glad tidings more glad and welcome than ever before. The ministers and elders rallied round the evangelists; the great mass of the Christian people became one in prayer; an extraordinary number of inquirers came for-

ward with the great question burning in their hearts; and not a few, especially of young men, appear to have passed from death unto life. In a word, the Spirit of God was breathing, the dry bones were stirring, and the great miracle of saving grace was performed before the eyes of many beholders. In particular, a large number of young men joyfully professed to believe in Christ.

After visiting Londonderry, the evangelists proceeded to Dublin, where they entered upon their labours on the 24th October. Here, during their month's stay, the work appeared to assume more remarkable development than had hitherto been witnessed. The field was encompassed with difficulties, such as few men could venture calmly to face, and fewer still could overcome. Unlike Protestant Belfast, the great majority of the inhabitants of the Irish capital are Roman Catholics, and of the small Protestant minority the greater proportion are Episcopalian. The circumstances were extremely delicate, but the good sense and tact of the Americans did not forsake them, the obstacles were in large measure overcome, and the blessing attending their labours seemed to be greater than ever. Doubtless, thousands of Christians throughout the three kingdoms, and in other parts of the world, sensible of the peculiar perils to which the movement was now exposed, continued "instant in prayer," entreating the interposition of Him who sits enthroned upon the very floods. One of the most remarkable phenomena connected with the work of God in our time was the manner in which the Roman Catholic press and population treated the whole work. Not only were words bearing a large measure of charity and tolerance uttered by that press, but Roman Catholics in considerable numbers attended the meetings, and there is ground for believing that some of them were among the many blessed. Roman Catholic priests were known to have attended the meetings, some of them openly "with hymn-book in hand," some of them in disguise. When asked by one of his people

if it were wrong to go and hear the evangelists, a priest replied that there could be no harm in hearing about Jesus. These are significant facts.

Many incidents of the work have already been given to the public. A gentleman came seventy miles to hear the Word, was converted, went and brought his whole family to hear the gospel also. The reporter of a paper hostile to the work hears the Word, and receives it in faith. An old man of seventy appears among the inquirers, weeping and declaring he has found no rest since he heard "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." Many came from great distances, and it is reported by those best able to judge, the ministers in various country towns and districts, that in this way life has been restored to the dead, and the living have life "more abundantly."

The special services were closed with a convention of three days' duration, which was attended by immense crowds, and amongst the rest some eight hundred ministers, many of whom had come from remote parts of the island. At one of the meetings two thousand converts were gathered together; and the proceedings throughout were characterised by a blended solemnity and joy, the enthusiasm rising occasionally to a pitch of exuberance seldom witnessed before.

Returning to England, the evangelists began work in Manchester early in December. Notwithstanding the unfavourable character of the weather, some two thousand five hundred Christian workers assembled in the Oxford Hall at an early hour, when Mr. Moody delivered his stirring, touching address on Courage, Perseverance, and Love; and Mr. Sankey sang, "Here am I: send me," with soul-melting pathos. It was soon apparent to every enlightened observer, that the prayers accumulated on the altar of God during previous months were beginning to be answered in a gracious movement of the Holy Spirit. The way of the Lord had thus been prepared; and that He was coming in

great power among them, many felt could no more be justly denied than the shining of the sun at noon-day.

The prayer-meeting at noon in the Free Trade Hall was attended by two or three thousand; the evangelistic meetings were crowded to overflowing,—meetings for women, meetings for young men; in short, every effort for winning souls was attended with tokens of divine blessing. The power of Jesus was present to heal. One man, rising from his knees, after committing “his whole self to Christ,” said to the minister who had been conversing with him, “I came from Bolton to-day; I did not think I should find Christ.” Just then another young convert came up; it was the man’s nephew; and “they greeted each other with joyful surprise.” As Mr. Sankey was singing “The Ninety and Nine,” an old gentleman, seventy years of age, who had come a great distance, exclaimed, “That’s me: Jesus has been seeking me all these years, wandering upon the mountains.” The aged wanderer rejoiced, for he was in the fold at last. A lady who had come from sheer curiosity, had her blinded eyes opened to see the glory of Jesus, and went home rejoicing. “Going along Oxford Street,” she said, “I could not refrain from singing aloud for joy.” A lad of fourteen is converted, and in the warmth of his first love he urges his father, a drunkard, to come and hear of the glad tidings. The father goes, and is converted; and now he becomes, in his own way, a missionary to his old companions, who with their wives and children are invited and induced to attend the meetings, the great change in many of that class being apparent to all who knew them.

The work of visiting the homes of the non-church-going was managed with ability and zeal by Mr. Radcliffe; and the services for the young men, conducted by Mr. Henry Drummond, of Edinburgh, were attended with much blessing. As is his wont, Mr. Moody took up the cause of the Young Men’s Christian Association, and lent effective aid in raising funds for the purchase of the Museum on their behalf. The whole amount,

£30,000, has been contributed, and the Young Men's Christian Association will now be comfortably and even nobly housed. Thus the work in all its branches prospered.

The impulse given to Christian work during the visit of the evangelists to Manchester is still in vigorous action. For instance, a band of ten young men, seven of whom were converted in the December meetings, have conducted evangelistic services every night without interruption during the last seven months, with an average attendance of eighty or a hundred men; and not a night has passed without inquirers remaining. And this is only one result out of many.

Sheffield was reached on the last night of 1874. For a whole year a united prayer-meeting had been carried on; but while the earnest Christians of the town looked forward with interest and even longing to the expected visit of the American brethren, the long delay seemed to have the effect of intensifying the fervour of their prayers that God might be pleased to pour His Spirit upon them, and to revive His work in the midst of the years, by whatever instrumentality or in whatever way it might seem meet in His wisdom and grace. Their prayers were now answered. The meetings in the Albert Hall were attended by many thousands, the numbers constantly increasing, till at length Mr. Moody was compelled to address the multitude in the church-yard. Many will never forget that scene. The preacher standing on a flat grave-stone, the many thousands listening as if to one of the dead who had just arisen with a message from the spirit-world; the old parish church in front seeming, like a solemn witness, to look down upon many a pale face and many a streaming eye, while the Holy Spirit gave manifest testimony to the word of grace.

The brief fortnight's services were not without much fruit, as many as six hundred confessing to have received Christ. Among other incidents, an elderly man, a backslider, who in his misery had resorted to drink, and when stung almost to madness by

remorse was about to commit suicide, was passing near the lower Albert Hall where Mr. Charles Daniels, of the Scottish Evangelistic Association, was conducting a children's service, preparatory to the visit of the American brethren. He went in; a simple prayer offered touched his heart. Remorse gave place to penitence; the prodigal returned to the Father's house; and the man, who in his wretchedness and despair was about to fill up the cup of guilt by adding the crime of suicide to the long dark catalogue of his other sins, was lifted by the Spirit of grace out of that "horrible pit," and set upon the Rock.

The city of Birmingham was next visited. Here the meetings, in point of attendance, were upon a greatly increased scale. In Bingley Hall as many as twelve and fifteen thousand assembled day after day. A great all-day meeting was held, the memories of which will be held sacred for life by the many ministers of the gospel and Christian people of every denomination who were present, and the influence of which will doubtless pulsate in the quickened efforts of many labourers in the Lord's vineyard there for years to come. None were more cordial here, as elsewhere, than the pastors of the churches; none more frank in acknowledging the work of the Spirit and the blessing personally enjoyed. The Sabbaths of that period were the happiest, some of them said, they had ever spent; and when they invited inquirers in their congregations to meet them at the close of the ordinary diets of public worship, they were surprised at the numbers of the anxious, there being in some cases as many as thirty to fifty in distress of soul. The prayers of parents were heard, and they had the joy of receiving into their arms their children as now through grace "the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty." Young men were converted. One, an apprentice, convinced that he was the slothful servant who had wasted the "one talent," fairly broke down at family worship and cried for mercy. He was taken to a room by himself, where he was told to read aloud John iii. 16: "God so loved the world," and

was asked if it met his case. "No," he said. "Then read it again." He read it ten times; but in vain. He could not see it. When asked to read the latter portion of the text, "*that whosoever* believeth in Him," the light appeared suddenly to dawn on him, and he fell on his knees, exclaiming, "Lord, I thank Thee for saving my soul." Running to his master, he said, "The Lord has taken away all my sin." When people wondered at his constant singing of hymns, and said he was excited, he replied, "How can I be otherwise, when I feel I have been saved from the grasp of the Wicked One?" Next morning he saluted a customer who came into the shop by saying, "I am saved!" He holds on in the good way.

The month of February was spent by the evangelists in Liverpool. Great preparations were made for their visit: Victoria Hall was built, at a cost of four thousand pounds, as a central place of meeting; ministers of every evangelical denomination combined; the voice of prayer was heard in many churches pleading for blessing; and that spirit of eager, yet humble expectancy, the forerunner of revival, seemed to rest on all who love the prosperity of Zion. At the first meeting—as usual, for Christian workers—some five or six thousand were present; while day after day, the succeeding services were attended in the aggregate by twenty thousand people, many of whom were of the working class, with a proportion even of the poorest poor. Here, as in other cities visited, the method of admission by ticket was judiciously employed, and with success; for in this way many of that class, now unhappily so numerous in our great towns, who live wholly outside the pale of Christian influences, found their way to the great temporary tabernacle, where they heard the gospel for the first time, and through grace not only met with Jesus, but believed on Him to the saving of the soul. The noon prayer-meeting, attended by six thousand; special services for men, when eight thousand listened to the gospel; crowded audiences of women, when touching appeals

were made to mothers ; gatherings of young men, many of whom were arrested and won for Christ ; multitudes of strangers from neighbouring towns and rural districts, and from Wales ; persons of every religious name, including Roman Catholics, and of no religion—these and similar facts illustrate the nature and extent of the movement in Liverpool. In the inquiry-room were found hundreds of souls hungering and thirsting for salvation, many of whom passed “out of darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God.” The tide of spiritual blessing rose and filled the creeks and channels of Christian work in every department : the Church, the Bible-class, the Sabbath-school, the prayer-meeting, were lifted high on the wave of prosperity to the joyful surprise of pastors and teachers. The spirit of inquiry found its way into workshops and counting-houses ; the great question of time—“What of eternity ?” was discussed in public places and in private parties, where shortly before the man who should have breathed such a matter would have been reckoned insane ; and the rough lads of the ship-building yards were meeting at meal-times for reading the Word of God and for prayer. What means the stirring, as by an invisible power, of all those pools ? Is there no healing of souls ? Can we believe that an unseen hand is thus laid upon many thousand hearts without some permanent result ? Or that a myriad eyes are eagerly directed to the glorious figure in the centre of the gospel—the Son of God—and not receive blessing from Him who says, “Look unto Me, and be ye saved” ? The testimony borne by ministers, teachers, and others, to the reality of the movement in its spiritual aspect and practical outcome, leaves no room for doubt that the cause of true religion has recently received a powerful impulse in the great sea-port, the beneficent effects of which will be felt for years to come.

It has been truly said that in London there is more good and more evil than in any other city in the world. More than a

million of its inhabitants never darken the door of church or chapel. Ignorance the most gross ; scepticism the most defiant ; atheism the most blasphemous ; worldliness the most grovelling ; poverty the most haggard ; crime so desperate as to be gloried in as an accomplishment, and followed as a profession ; sensuality in its beastliness, and vice utterly hideous ; in short, every villainess, creeping and loathsome, combines to form a picture of blended horror and melancholy. Every year thousands die in ignorance and sin. The heart grows sick at the thought of the fearful, sweltering mass of evil. You look out on that sea of gall, and feel how vain it seems for the Christian to pour his drop of sweetness in it. And yet there are many saints in London who not only keep their garments undefiled amidst infinite impurities, but have the faith and courage to attempt the cleansing of this Augean stable. The Christian agencies at work in the metropolis are numerous, varied, and full of energy. Many of the workers must be regarded as the most devoted, noble-minded, and heroic servants of Jesus. For singleness of purpose, for originality of method, for concentration of energy, for simplicity of faith, for breadth of philanthropy, and intensity of spiritual power, I doubt if in all the world there are to be found more eminent workers in the vineyard of the Lord than the Christian volunteers of London.

Besides faithful ministers of the gospel not a few, and living churches, with the ordinary evangelistic, educational, and charitable institutions attached, there is a constantly increasing number of powerful agencies, many of them original and peculiar in their modes of operation, at work on the heathenism of the great city. For instance, there is Mr. George Holland, who for the last twenty-one years has been toiling indefatigably and successfully among the "Arab" children in George Yard, more than a hundred of whom, grown to maturity, have become earnest Christian workers, while four of them are now ministers of the gospel. Eternity alone will reveal all the fruit of a life-

time's prayers and struggles in the very fore-front of the Lord's battle.

Then there is Miss Macpherson and her noble band of workers in the Home of Industry and Refuge in Commercial Street, by whose energetic and well-directed efforts—not to speak of the work among the poverty-stricken widows, or the missionary services among the very offscourings of wickedness in the slums of Spitalfields, where thieves, drunkards, and prostitutes dwell in a common pandemonium—over two thousand four hundred children, some three-fourths of that number being boys—orphans, waifs, abandoned little ones, and ragged inhabitants of the gutter—have been trained, conveyed to Canada, and settled in comfortable situations and homes in the land of the setting sun. To convey some idea of the various and original forms in which the work of Christ is carried on, it may be here stated that in connection with the efforts of the lady just named, some three thousand bouquets of flowers, with a text of Scripture affixed to each, are distributed in the hospitals twice a week by a staff of five hundred female visitors. Hundreds of gentle hands in gathering these flowers, and sorting these bouquets from day to day, are doing work for Him who said, “Consider the lilies how they grow.” And hundreds more in selecting and writing the texts of Scripture, and in shaping into various forms and ornamenting the cards on which they are written, are also doing work for the Lord. Some of the texts lie before me, such as—“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin;” “The Lord will provide;” “God is love;” “God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble;” “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God;” “Ask, and ye shall receive;” and, “Blessed are the poor in Spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Whilst most are written in English, some are in French, German, Italian, Spanish, and other European languages. The flowers soon fade, and their language soon dies to the patient's ear, but the word of the

Lord abideth for ever; and many a restored one carries away from the hospital the little card with the text to keep in remembrance of the time of trouble, and deliverance out of it; or it may be even as having been to them the message of divine mercy and salvation.

Time would fail to speak of other Christian enterprises, such as Dr. Barnardo's remarkable work of faith and labour of love among the homeless boys of East London, many of whom have thus been rescued from a premature grave, and better still, from premature vice and the broad way of destruction. Nor can we even glance at Mr. Booth's Christian Mission, with its numerous stations, and its increasing band of bold and earnest labourers in the gospel, through whose instrumentality sinners of the most debased type have been reformed; amongst the rest, for instance, a man of desperate character, a thief, a prize-fighter, and who had been sixteen times convicted for crime, but is now, through the amazing grace of God, adorning the doctrine of Jesus by a life of consistent obedience and well-doing. Sabbath-breakers, drunkards, profligate sailors, soldiers, and navvies, blasphemers, and fallen women, have been raised from the lowest depths, and are, both by lip and by life, giving testimony to the mighty power of the Holy Ghost through the gospel in saving sinners, even the vilest.

If so much is being done by the agencies and labourers named, what shall be said of the great and noble army of workers in connection with the City Mission, the Open-air Mission, and the almost countless host of Christian agencies of every form and name, that are doing battle with the tremendous evils of the great city? If so much is accomplished by a few, how great must be the sum of moral and spiritual good effected by the thousands of evangelistic labourers on the whole field! And how much more, if the churches were revived; if their office-bearers, teachers, and members, were filled with the Holy Spirit, and fired with a zeal for winning souls, such as animates

those whose labours have been crowned with a measure of success, which in any other place would be reckoned great, but in the very depths of the degradation of London is nothing less than a marvel! A revived church, that is to say a church baptized with the Holy Ghost, purified, sweetened, and made wholly clean, would purge the metropolis of its worst foulness, and heal many of its greatest sores.

The preparations made in the metropolis, in anticipation of the visit of the American evangelists, were commensurate with the greatness of the undertaking. Slowly and steadily the two indefatigable workers wrought their way up to this highest part of the vast field, over which they had scattered with so much blessing from heaven the seed of God's Word. Not less prudent than zealous, with calmness equal to their courage, they pursued their wisely-conceived scheme of operations, Divine Providence seeming to smile on their every step, until they stood face to face with the greatest city in the world. Never before, we may safely venture on saying, had so much prayer been offered on behalf of London. For months previous to the opening services in the Agricultural Hall, at Islington, and throughout the subsequent seventeen weeks, there was scarcely a city, or town, or village, or hamlet, or rural parish in the three kingdoms from which prayer was not daily ascending for the million-peopled city. That man is to be pitied who does not see in this one circumstance the finger of God. The magnitude of the work attempted, the difficulties to be met and overcome, the worldliness, pride, bigotry, scorn, and hostility to be encountered, the fierce glare of publicity, the lightning glances of criticism, and the predictions of failure, excited the sympathy and stirred the prayers of Christians, not only in this country, but in other lands. Nor have the results been disappointing. Never since the days of Wesley and Whitefield has London been so profoundly moved; and although in view of the infinite needs of its four millions of souls, the influence of the evangelists has

been only as a ripple on the surface of a lake, the fruits of their labours are of incalculable value.

The immense assemblages at the Islington Agricultural Hall ; the overflowing meetings at the Opera House, in the West End ; the Bow Road Hall, with its nightly congregation of ten thousand ; and the scarcely less numerous gatherings at Camberwell, in the south, during those months,—attest the breadth of interest awakened. Whether from idle curiosity, or some better motive, every grade of society, from royalty down to the denizen of the garret and the hovel, was represented ; and while the real spring of success was revealed in the prayer-meetings, where so many of those that fear the Lord gathered around the throne of grace, the conversations with inquirers showed plainly the truly spiritual character of the work. Here, as elsewhere, amidst many shades of variety arising from difference of class, education, temperament, manner of life, inquirers were characterized more or less by a felt sense of the need of Christ, a desire to know experimentally the truth of salvation, and a readiness to recognize the Word of God as the supreme court of appeal. Here, as elsewhere, too, many inquirers found instant relief by a cordial embrace of the Saviour through a simple acceptance of the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the Word.

I attended several of the meetings held in the East of London, at Bow Road Hall, and as the work did not differ materially in this quarter, I may give my impressions in a sentence or two. Whilst at the evangelistic services many were manifestly smitten with a sense of eternal things, the meetings for prayer at noon-day were most affecting. Some seventeen or eighteen hundred persons, the greater proportion of whom obviously belonged to the working classes, were daily in attendance. Usually, after several brief, fervent prayers were offered, the Word read with sundry terse, homely, incisive comments by Mr. Moody, and some simple gospel song, such as the "Lost Sheep," sung by Mr. Sankey, the assembly bowed their heads in silent prayer. Amidst

the deepest silence and solemnity one and another rise and request prayer on behalf of relatives or others about whose salvation they are burdened. A woman with choked utterance begs the prayers of the children of God on behalf of a drunken husband. An old man, apparently above the three score and ten, with a faltering voice desires the praying people to remember his poor prodigal boy. One sobs out a request on behalf of a brother, for whom prayer has been offered for twelve long years. And so on in a great many instances. And now those present who desire to be prayed for may intimate their request by simply standing up. A scene follows that might melt a heart of stone. A well-dressed lady, pale and trembling, rises and remains standing. Unconverted and in soul-trouble she thus silently appeals to the sympathies of the godly. Another, a young man, rises; a third, a soldier; a fourth, a woman, meanly clad and bowed with the weight of years. Here and there over the meeting they rise and stand. There is no sign of ostentation on the one hand, and none of formality on the other. Indeed, if ever the eye lighted on pictures of evident distress, and sorrow, and despair, it was when those figures, some pale and weeping, and others seemingly pierced with a grief too deep for tears, stood up amidst a silence so profound that you could hear now and again the sound of half-suppressed emotion, and thus solemnly declared before heaven, earth, and hell, that there was no help for them but in God. It seemed as if suddenly the Spirit fell upon the meeting. A feeling of deepest awe and most affecting tenderness appeared to rest on all, and there was an almost universal silent weeping. "Surely the Lord is here! How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven."

Afterwards, on mingling with the inquirers, I found cases of the usual types. A middle-aged lady, a minister's wife, is in deep distress because she is not able to realize Christ as a person. An elderly woman is in trouble because she never *feels* the love of God, or the forgiveness of sin; and discovers, after some

conversation, that she has never all her life really believed either in God's love or in Christ's blood, the discovery seemingly bringing to her light and peace. An old man is convinced that he is all wrong in his religion, and never knew the reality of saving grace. A young woman is weeping bitterly because her heart is so hard, and she cannot lay hold on the Saviour. A young man is sorely beset with temptations, and does not see how anybody in his position and circumstances could be a true Christian. His astonishment is complete when it is shown him, by the light of the Word of God, that his difficulty is rooted in unbelief, and the impossibility at which he stumbled melts away in a moment as he grasps the outstretched hand of the Saviour. Multiply these instances by a hundred, and you can thus form some conception of the extent, as well as the nature and inner meaning of the work of grace in the metropolis.

The labours of those two indefatigable Christian workers were brought to a close in London and this country by a conference held in Mildmay Park Hall on the afternoon of Monday, 12th July, when seven hundred ministers of the gospel, of every evangelical shade, together with their wives and other relatives, met to bid the honoured evangelists farewell. In the same thoughtful, unobtrusive, and affectionate manner in which they had begun and carried on their gigantic and marvellously successful labours, they brought their work to a close, expressing their tearful gratitude for kindness shown them, and giving thanks and glory to God for His grace.

From the day when they landed at Liverpool, and found no room and no work there,—from the first meeting at York, numbering four in all,—to the crowning success in London, what a singular story of prayer, and work, and blessing! Like the rivulet that springs up you cannot tell how, and goes on growing in a manner you are not able to discover, ever deepening and widening until it becomes a mighty river. When one reflects

on the immense sums of money voluntarily contributed for the furtherance of this work, upwards of twenty-eight thousand pounds having been expended in this way in London alone; the enormous amount of useful religious literature that has been put into circulation; the innumerable chords of interest that have been touched and made to vibrate throughout society in all its grades, from the palace to the hovel; the thousands of believers who have gathered together for prayer; the hundreds of thousands of dust-soiled travellers to the eternal world that have listened to the teachings of the gospel, many of whom have been guided into the path of peace,—it is impossible to resist the conclusion, "This is the finger of God!" The records of the awakening are on high. The traces of it will be found in myriads of hearts and lives; but the full outcome will be disclosed only in the light of the last judgment, when all the ripened fruits of grace will be gathered into the garner of heaven.



CHAPTER VI.

THE WORK IN VILLAGES AND RURAL DISTRICTS.

"**T**HAT shower is worth thousands of pounds to the country," said a farmer, as the rain was falling after a long drought. Very soon the sky cleared, and little trace of the shower was left behind, except the deepened green of the fields and hedgerows. And yet the farmer was right; every blade of corn, every spire of grass had caught its own share of the benison, and was all unseen thrusting itself heavenward and harvestward, as if the whole world depended upon its individual progress.

So it was in the recent spiritual refreshing. The shower fell everywhere with more or less blessing. Many Christians were cheered and stirred, and stimulated Christward, heavenward. The very report of sinners embraced in the arms of God's love, of souls saved, was to many as a heaven-sent portion of angels' food, a fresh gospel, an apostolic benediction. Here and there a wonderful flutter of interest is awakened in the Sabbath-school—little ones are gathered into the arms of Jesus. In many quiet valleys, far from the din of noisy cities, an unwonted feeling of solemnity falls on the minister's Bible-class—a young man, a young woman, without any striking demonstration, passes through the strait gate. In other quarters there is a mighty quaking of souls; scenes of undying interest are witnessed; the revival is a palpable reality, scoring its own

mark on the memories of even worldly men. There has been a shower of blessing, and although the need of infinitely more is only too obvious, we can scarcely over-estimate the value, in its full outcome, of the grace that has been recently granted to our land. Some may not see it ; for it needs grace to see grace : certainly, it needs an unjaundiced spiritual eye to see spiritual life in its germs. Like the passing shower, there may seem to be little trace of it here or there ; but the sense of a Saviour's love, and the joy of God's salvation conveyed to ten thousand hearts, is worth a great deal in itself and in its outcome.

In our crowded cities, with their heat and high pressure, the great pot of social life boils over more rapidly and noisily than in rural parts, with their old-world, slow-going, phlegmatic ways and manners. A religious awakening therefore is a more remarkable phenomenon in the sleepy atmosphere of rustic life, than in the city with its thermometer always at a higher range. No doubt the grace of God, working in the hearts and lives of men, is a marvel anywhere ; but the manifestation of it in a great revival is more striking, and the results generally more pure in the country than in the town. In some respects it is more difficult to be real in a little village or rural parish, where everybody has an eye on everybody, than in the town ; for in the fierce glare of universal acquaintanceship men cannot hide away their crookednesses so easily as in the thickets of city life.

It would be well-nigh impossible so much as to name the little towns, villages, and rural districts, where there has been of late some appreciable movement ; but, for illustration, a few may be selected at different points. One in Banffshire, another in Aberdeenshire, a third in the extreme east of Scotland, a fourth in the extreme west, the island of Tiree, and a fifth in the very centre, in the county of Perth. These will represent Highlands and Lowlands, rustic life and seaboard, fisher life, the best educated of our common people, and the less favoured in point of education and the influences of modern civilization. Let it be

observed too, that in these several localities there has been no Moody or Sankey, and no special agency whatsoever : just the pastor, the elder, the Sabbath-school teacher, and the God-fearing father or mother, and such help as heaven sends those who in heaven's name help themselves. It has been well said, that as a blaze here and there in a dark night indicates a beacon on the hill-top, while a universal glow around the horizon tells of the rising sun, so an awakening in two or three particular places might only bespeak a special agency at work ; whereas the sudden, simultaneous brightening of vital godliness all over the land is proof that the Sun of righteousness is rising with healing under His wings. This is not the beacon-fire of man, it is the light of God's kindling.

THE WORK IN TIREE.

Of the Hebrides, although they lie so near our shores, how few know more than they do of the South Sea Islands, or any group at the remotest bounds of the earth ; and yet around many of those lovely islands that stud the Atlantic on the western shores of Scotland there is a charm of solitude, picturesque scenery, and local history running back into the region of ancient feud, adventure, and legend and song, that is often full of romance. Out in the Atlantic, amidst the full swell of its billows, far beyond the mainland, passing the greater island of Mull, towering with awful grandeur above the ocean, past Iona and Staffa and Ulva, whose very names thrill the heart with memories of the most remote past, enveloped in a halo of all that is pure, and saintly, and tender, and tragic, and wonderful, some hours sailing westward bring you to the island of Tiree. In this islet, from whose innermost haunt you can almost hear the moan of the breakers, some three thousand souls find a habitation ; and while the heavy rains and drizzling mists from the Atlantic, and the fierce storms of winter, are familiar things, there are days of softest sunshine and seasons balmy

and genial, when life is more than tolerable, and the Tirean thinks his island home the happiest spot on earth.

The great body of the population are attached to the Established Church, the remaining portion being divided among the Free Church, the Congregationalists, and Baptists. In most cases till recently the profession of religion was merely nominal ; but while the indications of a warm, vital interest in the gospel were far from common, there were some earnest and devoted spirits whose longings for better things doubtless found expression in many a fervent appeal to heaven ; and the people generally stood in no disrespectful attitude towards religion or its teachers.

Reports of the work of grace at Edinburgh, and Glasgow, and other places on the mainland found their way to Tiree, and excited some interest, if not also prayer and expectation of blessing. Mr. Sankey's hymns, which seemed to float everywhere on the air, reached the island, and the singing of them by young men who had caught their spirit as well as their melody, still further prepared the way for the awakening of last year. A minister who had attended Mr. Moody's meetings at Elgin, returned to the west with a heart full of interest in the gracious work, and his account of what he had seen and heard in Morayshire seemed to fall like a spark on the dry tinder. A movement, at once calm and profound, began ; and the awakening interest in the gospel soon spread over the whole island, resulting in the conversion, it is believed, of one-tenth of the entire population. The work began on the 23rd August, and continued in its more striking manifestations for seven weeks. The ministers threw themselves heartily into the movement, receiving aid from brethren belonging to some of the neighbouring islands. The people came in crowds to hear the gospel, many listening with a new and surprising eagerness to the truth they had so often slighted before. Men were seen hurrying to finish their work in the harvest-field, as if the harvest-day of God had arrived, and they could not

imperil their souls by longer delay. Women were seen hastening to milk the cows, almost oblivious of the stated hours, some carrying their milking vessels to the meeting rather than miss the opportunity, as if the concerns of eternity had become paramount. And yet there was no undue excitement, and not even many signs of emotion, the anxious inquirers carefully concealing their tears. Sometimes, however, many were overcome by a sense of divine and eternal things, and affecting scenes were witnessed. One girl is weeping bitterly, and is asked by a minister what is the matter. She makes no reply; but a young man, her brother, whose head is bowed in trouble of soul as he sits beside her, says, "It is for me she is weeping." Another, a young woman, says she "feels as if a window had been opened in her heart," a not uncommon feeling at such a time. Three young women, dairymaids, were so convinced of sin and of the need of Christ that they could scarcely sleep. One night after a meeting they retired to rest; but one of them, after tossing in a fever of anxiety until about three in the morning, arose and lit a candle, which awakened the other two, who seeing the state of their companion became more anxious than ever. Next day, as their minister tells, they could scarce milk their cows, or do any work. Their kind-hearted Christian mistress, perceiving their trouble, for one of them could do nothing but weep, expressed her sympathy, and tendered suitable advice. At length, one of them was enabled to lay hold on the word of grace, on which she exclaimed, "I believe it! I believe it!" Another shortly afterwards coming in, and seeing her companion's joy, was also enabled, after a short struggle, to receive Jesus; while the third found rest to her soul as she was praying and walking through her room, by light on the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." "The relief that I then found I cannot declare," is her own description of the matter. From that day they have gone on rejoicing in the Lord, and praising Him for His grace.

Upwards of three hundred have been converted, a proportion of the population that indicates a more remarkable work by far than any results obtained in our cities, even where the movement has attained the largest dimensions. It seemed at one stage of the awakening as if the fervent aspiration should be realized to which a minister in an open-air meeting gave expression, when, in the midst of the deepest solemnity and sense of the presence of God, he raised his voice and with his arms stretched out towards the heavens, exclaimed, "Tiree for Christ ! Tiree for Christ !"

CELLAR-DYKE.

Cellar-dyke is a fishing village at the east nook of Fife, in close neighbourhood with Anstruther, the birthplace of Thomas Chalmers, and looks out, almost at the lip of the Firth of Forth, upon the waters of the German Ocean. The inhabitants of this little town, like those of the numerous fishing villages that line the eastern coast of Scotland, are a brave, hardy race, at once impressible and thoughtful, impulsive and grave.

There was a quickening of the dry bones here in 1860. A young man, who had been at Newhaven, where he had seen and heard the "strange things" of grace in its powerful workings, returned to Cellar-dyke deeply impressed, and told his story to wondering ears. The immediate result was a prayer-meeting on the evening of Sabbath, and the arousing of one man to seek salvation. On putting to sea next night the comrades of the inquirer held a prayer-meeting in the forepart of the boat, when three Christians prayed in succession, and the whole company joined in singing the hymn, so well known at that period—

"O happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God !
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad."

The anxious man cried aloud to God for mercy ; and his companions pointed him to the mercy of God in His Son Jesus

Christ; yet he grew no better, but worse. They then went and looked into the nets, and finding no fish, they renewed their conversation with the inquirer. The light now broke in upon him, and he began to rejoice. Great was the happiness of the godly portion of the crew; a fish was now caught in the gospel net, and for awhile they thought not of their own nets nor their prospects for that night. Another meeting, a praise-service, was held, and they sang again with voices full of joy, while the rippling sound of the water on the sides of the boat seemed to make response—

“Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!”

The newly-converted man cried aloud for joy, adding to the chorus of the hymn—

“O happy day for me!”

In what strange places does the Good Shepherd find His lost sheep! Where He had sought and found others in ancient time, in the boat among the nets, He sought and found this man. The ocean, in whose depths many a saint lies resting, must needs be also the birthplace of others, that the great sea on which His feet walked so gloriously may still acknowledge its Lord, and yield its tribute at the call of His mighty voice. The young convert heard the Master saying, “Feed my lambs,” and he is now a teacher in the Sabbath-school. Far more than if they had borne to land the most wonderful draught of fishes did the tidings of the man’s conversion affect the neighbourhood. A revival followed, the fruits of which happily still remain, although some of the converts have “fallen asleep.”

When tidings of the work in Edinburgh, in the winter of 1873, were borne across the Forth, the Christians of Cellar-dyke were deeply moved, and early in 1874 signs of the presence of the Spirit of grace in no ordinary measure became apparent. A visit from the American Evangelists was not to be expected; nor was any aid obtained from without. In these circum-

stances they gave themselves to prayer, pleading for the Spirit and power of God, all the more importunately that they were assisted neither by ministers nor evangelists. For five weeks a noon-day prayer meeting was held, and afterwards a meeting every night for six months, during which period the power of prayer was tested and illustrated in a striking way. At first the converts consisted almost exclusively of females, there being no young men, nor men of any class except two, among those who newly confessed Christ. The week of prayer for young men, early in the spring of 1874, was observed at Cellar-dyke with unwonted fervour and expectation of blessing. Immediately thereafter, some sixty young men professed to believe through grace on the Lord Jesus.

Special prayer was next made for *mothers*, and the answer was given in the conversion of a number of them. The awakening and conversion of *fathers* then became the subject of nightly intercession at the meetings, with a corresponding marvellous issue in the turning of the hearts of fathers not a few to the Lord. One of these said, "I have washed about the world like an old tar-barrel for forty years, and I am wondering how God has saved me!"

At this stage of the movement, it was observed by the Christians that there were aged men and women in the town who manifested, on the very brink of the eternal world, an utter indifference about the interests of the soul. For these special prayer was now offered with some remarkable results. One old woman, 84 years of age, finding Jesus, became young again in her joy and freshness of life in God. Rejoicing in the Lord, she said, alluding to her conversion, "I am jist twa days auld." It was not so in every instance. An old man of eighty, when urged upon to receive Jesus, made excuse, saying, "Oh, it is time enough to be saved!" and the grey-headed procrastinator tottered along the last inch of life in the fond delusion of a convenient time yet to come.

During this period of intense spiritual activity a scheme of Christian work was organized and carried into effect. In addition to Sabbath-school teaching, prayer-meetings, and evangelistic services, the Christians went forth two and two to visit every house, to deal with individuals, and to speak of Jesus to every man, woman, and child. Besides the work on shore, in the summer time there are prayer-meetings in many of the boats at sea. Thus God sent His blessing in answer to prayer, reviving His work in the hearts of His people, and turning sinners to Himself, without any special agency, whether of evangelist or minister.

Among many other rural districts that have recently enjoyed the special visitation of the Spirit of grace, the little quiet Highland valley of Logierait, Perthshire, may be noticed as a favourable instance. The awakening there occurred chiefly in the Free Church, of which Rev. G. D. R. Munro, now of Hillhead, was then minister. For some time previously there was much spiritual death; but after the week of prayer, early in 1874, which was earnestly observed by the congregation, the Christians were greatly stirred up, and blessing speedily followed. The attendance at the usual prayer-meetings was remarkably increased, and signs of divine power were visible everywhere up and down the valley. A week spent in Edinburgh, in the middle of January, by the minister, seemed to mark an era in the movement. Returning to his flock, with his heart full of a sweet sense of what he had witnessed of the Spirit's work in the metropolis, he began a series of special services, in which he was assisted by Mr. H. Smith, an agent of the Scottish Evangelistic Society. These meetings, extending over a fortnight, were of an extraordinary character. The people attended in crowds; the reviving interest in the gospel was strikingly obvious; numbers took advantage of the meeting for inquirers; and one after another, chiefly young persons, were enabled, openly and joyfully, to profess faith in Jesus.

The ice was now fairly broken. For the space of nearly six months, the tide of blessing continued to flow. There were no special agencies employed; the work was carried forward by the pastor and the ordinary congregational helps. Some fifty professed to have passed from death unto life, not one of whom, says the minister, is known to have fallen away.

In regard to the features of the work, it was observed that the blessing seemed to go in families, whole households in some cases passing out of darkness into light. It was wholly confined to those who had previously attended the public means of grace. In most cases the change was marked and striking, many suddenly passing from a sense of sin and helplessness into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. There was no undue excitement; only in one case was there any physical manifestation. The power of God was felt, and was felt as a power present to heal.

The singing of those hymns, now so widely known, was seemingly much used for blessing. As the arrow of conviction piercing the conscience, and as the balm of consolation for the wounded heart, these gospel songs were evidently employed by the Holy Spirit for the furtherance of His work in a very remarkable degree. In the evenings the sweet sound of these songs of Zion could be heard on the highways, as the joyful band of young believers went and came from the meetings. So it ever is; when the Lord gives the word, great is the company of those that publish it, even if it be songs for sermons, the highway for a pulpit, and the heavens for a sounding-board.

During the early part of last year showers of blessing fell on extensive portions of the counties of Aberdeen and Banff. In many of the parishes 1874 will be held in everlasting memory. In hundreds of souls, previously dwelling in the region and shadow of death, a great light sprang up. Among other places, the little rural hamlet of Cornhill was the scene of a remarkable

work of grace, which threw its hallowed influence over portions of seven or eight surrounding parishes. The awakening was confined almost entirely to the Free Church, of which Rev. C. G. Macdonald is minister. It began, as usual, in the prayer-meeting, where accounts of the work in Edinburgh and elsewhere were read amidst signs of profound interest. This gave wing to prayer. The meetings became so crowded that it was found necessary to adjourn to the church. This building, capable of accommodating five hundred persons, was soon filled on week evenings. This for a sparsely-peopled rural district was altogether out of the ordinary run of events. Not only from the little basin-shaped vale, in the centre of which Cornhill is situated, but also from the parishes lying beyond the surrounding ridge of hills, five or six miles away, the people came to hear the gospel, as if they had never before listened to the glad tidings, earnestness and even intense anxiety being depicted on those usually stolid countenances.

Many were convinced of sin ; many sought and found the Saviour. On some occasions as many as seventy or eighty persons, in deep distress of spirit, remained for conversation. One night the session-house, a room capable of accommodating sixty, was filled with inquirers twice over. It was touching to see so many on their knees, prostrate at the mercy-seat, sending up piercing cries for salvation. At one time when a crowd of inquirers were thus pouring forth their supplications, one young voice was heard in touching accents pleading thus : "O Lord, send forth Thy light and Thy truth, and lead us to Jesus for salvation. Thou knowest that we want to be saved. Oh, save ; save, Lord—save now—save us all ! Let us not go away to-night unsaved." Many arrived at peace in believing. Over two hundred in anxiety were conversed with.

The work of grace was most signally developed among the better-educated class and in godly families, especially the families of the elders and deacons. A remarkable blessing fell on the

young men, some forty of whom instituted a prayer-meeting for themselves, almost the entire band taking a judicious and edifying part in the exercises. Nor were the children left outside the good influence, many of the little ones in the Sabbath-school receiving, it is believed, the grace of God. "Why are you so happy?" said a minister to a little girl with a beaming countenance. "Because I believe Jesus loves me," was the prompt reply, "and has taken away my sins."

In some instances the blessing enjoyed by the children produced the deepest anxiety in their parents. One father, whose children had all received the blessing, was found in great distress. Of an amiable disposition and good reputation, he had always maintained much reverence for religion. He had read his Bible from his youth, he had earnestly desired that his children might be found walking in the good ways of God; but now, when they were rejoicing, he felt extremely dissatisfied with his own state, knowing that he yet lacked one thing. At length the burden was rolled away. He was enabled to lay hold on Jesus as an all-sufficient Saviour. No sooner had he found rest in Christ than he took his way to tell his friends, and to press on them the consideration of the interests of eternity.

One of the young converts has passed away, his consistent life and triumphant death leaving a fragrant memory and making a deep impression. On his conversion he became "a sunbeam at home, and the joy of his companions." During the brief year of his probation on earth he lived only to bless others. In his last illness he said, "Father, I thought at first it would be hard to leave you and mother, and my sisters and brothers; but Jesus has made it easy. I thought I should be such a help to all; but God will be your help." When his mother wiped the perspiration from his face and referred to his suffering, he replied cheerfully, "Yes; but, mother, I will say—

"When the death-dew lies cold on my brow,
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now."

And in his last moments, when his father spake of his lying in the cold grave, he made reply, "Yes, father, but glory, glory, dwelleth in Immanuel's land." His latter end was full of peace. A holy life and a peaceful death—these are good fruits of revival.

It is worthy of remark that no special agency was employed in connection with this work. It was carried on instrumentally by the minister, aided by the ordinary congregational agencies and the pastors of neighbouring churches.

Drumblade, a quiet rural parish in Aberdeenshire, was favoured with a remarkable visitation of the Holy Spirit in the spring of 1874. For half a century the church there, of which Rev. Alexander Forbes is pastor, has enjoyed an evangelical and faithful ministry. The congregation partook largely of the great blessing in the revival fifteen years ago. But previous to the last awakening, the pulse of spiritual life beat feebly, although there were several prayer-meetings, and not a few of the professing Christians were accustomed to take part in them. The young men and women, and others not professing godliness, were utterly dead in their sins. Over this state of matters the minister felt deep and painful yearnings of heart, and much did he desire to speak personally to every man, woman, and child in the parish about the great salvation. But, as he tells, he did not at that time possess the courage to face all and sundry with the pointed question, "Are you born again?"

Quickened by the intelligence from Edinburgh, the minister announced from the pulpit two special prayer-meetings, one at noon, the other at night. At first the attendance was very small, especially at the noon meeting, which was discontinued at the end of a week, while the other was held every night for three months. After a short space of time the interest began to increase more and more, until at length the windows of heaven were manifestly opened, and marvellous results followed.

For the purpose of reaching the young men and women in the congregation, as yet unconverted, the minister invited them from the pulpit to tea at his house. Some fifty responded to the invitation, and that night saw the first convert. This social meeting furnished the pastor with an opportunity of speaking to them all personally about their lost state, and need of being born again. One young woman was enabled to believe, and two of the young men were awakened, while the rest were deeply impressed with the sight of their companions weeping and seeking the Saviour.

A fortnight after this an all-day meeting was held on the Sabbath. It was a new thing. The church was thronged; addresses were delivered by various ministers; and a young man, who had long felt deep convictions of sin, was converted.

The tidings from Edinburgh, and the fact that prayer had been offered there on behalf of the congregation at Drumblade, seemed to add to the deepening impression, and to prepare the way for the fuller blessing. It was observed by the people that the preaching of their minister had become peculiarly solemn and urgent. More than ever before it was characterized by a singular fulness of gospel truth, the offer of a living, personal Saviour being pressed on the acceptance of every sinner with unwonted fervour. Again and again was testimony borne to the fact that "no preaching honours God so much, and no preaching is so much honoured of God, as the free offer of Christ—God's gift to a perishing world."

The meeting, that numbered only six or eight at the beginning, came to be attended, in the course of the revival, by four hundred. Inquirers, instead of dropping by twos or threes, remained at the close of every meeting in great numbers, and conversions took place every night. About two hundred in all professed to have received the "effectual call" of the Spirit's grace. Of these twenty had been members of the Church; but now, acknowledging their previous profession to have been

unreal, they were enabled to testify that the gospel had become to them the power of God. Among the twenty were five deacons, young men lately advanced to that office, whose conversion made a profound impression on the rest of the people. With only two or three exceptions, all the young men and young women of the congregation were among those who professed to have obtained mercy. Some forty of the children also were among the young converts. In several instances, it was after the conversion of their little children that fathers and mothers, no longer able to hold out against the wonder-working grace of God, surrendered to the Lord Jesus. "Oh, father, just trust Him!" said a little believing boy of twelve to his father, who had returned from the meeting in a state of such anxiety that he could not conceal it from his family. "Just trust Him, father," said the little disciple, thus commending the great Master. Curiously enough, what all the teachings, counsels, and prayers of ministers and others in the inquiry-room had failed to accomplish, was effected by the words of the child. The father was enabled to trust Jesus, and now he and his family are rejoicing in the Lord.

The work began by prayer, and was carried on by never-ceasing supplications. Many and striking answers to prayer were vouchsafed. On one occasion, when many were in a state of great distress of soul, deep convictions of sin characterising almost every case, a telegram was transmitted to the noon prayer-meeting at Edinburgh with request for special intercession on behalf of those anxious ones. Next day ten of these inquirers were found rejoicing in the God of salvation. One night prayer was offered for four unbelieving young men, well known in the congregation for their utter indifference to the interests of the soul. Within three days the whole four were seen standing up and bearing joyful testimony to the grace of God.

Other four young men were found at midnight on the highway wrestling with God in prayer for one another, all of them

in the lowest depths of soul-trouble. It was a strange spectacle. The highway for an inquiry-room; the hour, midnight, and no light to guide them to that Arm of salvation for which they grope in vain. The silence of the most silent hour of night is disturbed by the sound of those sobbing voices, and the stars, like God's watchers, are looking calmly down. The cry for help is first answered in the sudden and unexpected appearance of a Christian upon the scene. This passer-by, hearing the sounds of an agony which, happily, he can understand, stops his horse. They request him to come and pray with them, for their distress is great, almost past endurance. Himself a redeemed sinner, his sympathies are with the four strugglers; cheerfully complying with their request, he steps down from his gig, to offer the prayer of faith with them and for them. And while the dumb animal stands in the middle of the highway, the unintelligent witness of the sublime transaction, God is sending down the Angel of the Covenant with the sought-for deliverance. For, in due course of the divine mercy and purpose, as it would seem, the four young men passed from the bondage of sin into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

One of the most remarkable cases was the conversion of an old man, upwards of seventy. He had spent his life in the service of sin. He attended the meetings, and appearing to be anxious, one night the minister called on him by name to surrender to the Saviour. "Yield, James, yield to the Lord Jesus," said the minister to the aged sinner again and again. For ten minutes he thus pled with him, but for the moment in vain. That night, however, when James went home, his wife saw him on his knees for the first time in his life. The aged seeker found Him whom he sought for: at the eleventh hour he entered, as he trusts, into the kingdom of God.

A young man, twenty years of age, and a Roman Catholic, was converted at this time. Employed as a labourer on a farm not far from the church, he could scarcely fail to catch some of

the strange voices that were filling the air all around. He was awakened, but scarcely could tell by what means. For some days he went about in his trouble, keeping the painful secret to himself. At length he was enabled to overcome his prejudices so far as to attend a meeting. Here his convictions were deepened, and his light, which was then very small, was increased. At the close he ventured into the inquiry-room, and there was enabled to receive Christ, whom he has since, it is believed, earnestly followed.

More than a year and a half has elapsed since the awakening took place; and the pastor is enabled to testify that those who then professed to believe on the Lord Jesus are still holding fast.

You cannot tabulate spiritual work. The seeming and the real are not necessarily identical; at least, you never can be sure they are one and the same. Statistics, therefore, only afford a rude approximation to the truth. With this caveat, it may be observed, that in proportion to the population the number of professed converts in Drumblade, and in some other rural districts also, was immensely greater than in the cities and towns; in fact, was as ten to one. For instance, had the work in Edinburgh been on a similar scale, instead of thirteen hundred converts, there should have been thirteen thousand.



CHAPTER VII

THE PRAYER-MEETING.

BEYOND all question prayer is the mightiest weapon of the Church militant. It is the instrument by which most of all God is glorified. Here man is least and lowest ; here God is greatest and highest. In prayer, reason and intellect, will, faith, love and hope, wisdom, learning, and all the greatness of man, lie prostrate. Here in His children's acknowledged helplessness and need Jehovah finds a wide and fitting theatre for the play of His omnipotence and the display of His grace. The sense of utter impotence and want, and of dependence on God, is the soul of true prayer ; our vast need is the empty space which He who doeth wonders loves to people with the bright creations of His grace. The greatest Christian is he who has most influence in heaven ; the strongest believer is he who has most power with God. If ever victory is obtained over sin and Satan, it is at the throne of grace. If ever the eye of faith sees far into eternity, it is from the summits of prayer. If ever the soul drinks deep of the wells of salvation, it is in the rapt moments of communion. If ever the saint's progress is like "the chariots of Amminadib," it is when in the higher spheres of prevailing intercession faith and love are transformed into steeds of fire. If ever man's tongue utters the words of eloquence ; if ever man's soul is made to glow with seraphic ardour ; if ever the human heart is touched with a feeling

of disinterested goodness; if ever the hand of mortal is gifted with the powers of pure beneficence; and if ever the whole being of man thrills with a joy that is not of earth, and brightens into the very image of God,—surely it is in the hour of calm, confiding fellowship, when two invisible hands meet and touch, the hand of faith and the Hand that was pierced, when the kiss of divine love is warm on the soul's cheek, when the eye rests on the more than golden treasures of the everlasting covenant, and the Father's voice seems to say, Child, ask what thou wilt, and it shall be given thee. Such moments as these are full of destiny and power, leaving behind them monuments for time and memories for eternity.

The recent world-wide calls to prayer, and the cordial response to those calls by the whole Church, is one of the brightest omens of our time. In this one respect the progress of the Christian cause within the last twenty years is truly amazing. These great impulses of prayer are the Church's forward movements towards the promised land of universal conquest and millennial rest. This one great resource of prayer she is only beginning to touch. And when at length the children of God are resolved in one body, being girt for that end with divine strength, to try and to achieve the utmost effect of prayer, the final triumphs of the Gospel will be at hand, and to the heaven-moving cry of faith will come back the response, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ."

Recently the world in its wisdom threw down the gauntlet to the men of prayer. The challenge was accepted by the living Church; the issue was not doubtful. Once more Satan has overshot the mark. It seemed as if the adversary expected unbelief should sweep the field. The reverse has followed; faith and prayer, so far, remain victorious. As in the great awakening fifteen years ago, the movement now in progress is characterized by an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit of grace and supplications. Those who love the throne of grace and carry on the

largest transactions there are least troubled with the small sceptical questions regarding the efficacy of prayer, which seem to be the torment of men so dim-sighted as to be hardly able to distinguish between reason and faith. Such theorists hang about the gate Beautiful, asking alms for their crippled religion; but to enter the temple itself and see the glory within is too much for their faith or their philosophy. Meantime, while they are begging from Science aid for their impoverished beliefs, those whose "help cometh from Him who made the heavens and the earth" enter in and obtain in answer to prayer such confirmations of faith in God and in His Son as put doubt to silence and unbelief to shame.

In those great gatherings for prayer, the essential spiritual unity of all true believers in Christ was seen in the clearest light. If there were various colours, they were the colours of the rainbow, blended in complete oneness. At the throne of grace differences of opinion are held in abeyance, rivalries and jealousies cease; Calvin and Wesley are one. The denominational stole is concealed beneath the robe of the Christian. The ecclesiastical badge loses all its glitter in the presence of the far more excellent glory of the common sonship. All the creeds are merged in the common confession of sin, and in the believing mention of the one great Name and Sacrifice. Here the fringe of office is no more seen than the phylactery of pride, and the pulpit is not higher than the pew.

The power of Christian union found in these gatherings a happy illustration. Partial though the union was, the results were striking. The arm of divine strength was outstretched in visible power and in rich beneficence. Zion's cords were lengthened, her stakes were strengthened, and her children were filled with love and joy. The spectacle carried consternation into the camp of the Romanist, the Ritualist, and the Sceptic. What then will be the influence of the living Church when the union shall have become perfect? The light of the moon will

then be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun as the light of seven days.

There was in the union prayer-meetings a powerful concentration of spiritual force. All the little live coals gathered together made the fire bright. Each gave its warmth to the rest until the mass glowed with the white heat of intensity. It was not simply the strength of combination; it was the combined force of all when the strength of each one was exerted to the uttermost by contact and sympathy. So the sense of the common faith and interest rose to that ardour of holy enthusiasm which the Spirit of God often employs for the furtherance of His work. In the warmth and energy of the united supplication many felt it unusually easy to pray. The atmosphere, so to say, was so purely spiritual that the breath of prayer was natural, spontaneous, and free. The faith of the strong lifted up the faith of the weak, and many felt emboldened to ask more than they had ever done. The distance between the soul breathing out its desire and the gracious ear of the divine Benefactor seemed to be reduced to a minimum. The condescension, tenderness, and overflowing bountifulness of Him who spared not His own Son, filled the hearts of believers with a confidence so childlike, that many hastened in the sanctuary of their own souls to crowd into their requests every matter of interest and desire. They were delighting themselves in God, and He in terms of the promise was granting to them the desires of their hearts. The believing soul is never further removed from selfishness than at such seasons, and never more ready to say, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

The requests for prayer, almost incredible in number, revealed the secrets of many hearts. A mother calls for help as she pleads for her prodigal boy, gone she knows not where. A wife is in an agony for a drunken husband, or all that remains in the moral wreck that still bears that endearing name. A sister is in the deepest shades of sorrow for a sister who has gone far astray.

A daughter's heart is breaking as she beholds the darkness of eternity descending on an ungodly father. In short, there is every form of sorrow and soul-trouble. Oh, what grief and anguish and conflict are here revealed! What untold tales of heart-blight and bitterness, what unwritten tragedies of strife, and madness, and soul-murder! But amidst all the darkness, what a soft and holy radiance of faith in Christ, of hope in the compassionate God, of sanctified human affection, of gleams of better things from off the altar of prayer! It is good to visit the house of sorrow; it is good to come, as we then did, into the chamber of many a hidden grief. The lessons of sympathy, communion with the saints, and the true meaning and power of intercessory prayer, were to be learned here.

It was an affecting, as well as instructive, discovery of the secrets of many hearts with which the great Intercessor was thus pleased to favour us. Deeply grateful it behoved us to be to Him who condescended in this providential manner to show us unexpectedly so much of what is going on within the veil. We could not but ponder the significance of all that was wrapt up in the fact of so many Christian hearts being in an agony of concern for the spiritual welfare of others. What means all this burden for which relief is sought in social prayer? What is the full import of this outbursting wail of ten thousand hearts yearning in Christian sympathy over ten thousand more? Truly, our unbelief is rebuked, our fears are scattered. God is working gloriously in the land. "Ye, my fearful servants, my disheartened workers," the Master seemed to say, "come and see what I am doing in the sanctuary of a myriad souls; come and see the fire glowing on a multitude of holy, consecrated heart-altars; come and see the way that I am preparing in secret for blessing thousands of the unblessed and the perishing; come and see within the veil, and be of good courage." It was only a glimpse, partial and dim, but it was full of encouragement and hope; it filled us with gratitude and praise, and we said, "Thank

God, as yet the great Christian heart of our country beats sound and strong."

Dr. Nettleton, the sagacious and successful American evangelist, invariably declined to begin work when the Christians were not roused to special prayer. He would not work with broken or blunted tools. Finding his own part enough for him, he refused to take the part of others also. No prayer, no power; no power with God, no blessing from God. This is the beginning, middle, and end of the secret of success in the work of Christ; in Church or mission; in pulpit or class; in hall of theology or family circle. Let any Christian worker set himself in faith to try, as John Foster suggests, the uttermost effect of prayer, and he will soon experience a joyful surprise.

The two countrymen of Nettleton, recently among us, pursue a similar course. Their whole policy may be summed up in this. Enlist the sympathies of the children of God, secure their union in prayer, and let the burden of unsaved souls be laid upon their hearts; thus, through the Spirit of grace, the work is begun and carried on. The union prayer-meetings, established by the two evangelists, and attended by hundreds of thousands of Christians in the three kingdoms, will be a bright spot in the memories of multitudes; for if the testimony of the ripest saints and most accomplished ministers of the gospel be of any value, often did the answer to prayer come quickly, sometimes, indeed, "while they were yet speaking," and always with the fair seal of their divine origin affixed. Marked and numerous answers to prayer mould personal character and shape the destiny of churches, forming an era in the life of individual believers, and making a new point of departure in a Christian community. With the exception of the great prayer epoch of 1859-60, our country has not seen, during the present century, such a season of "grace and supplications." The windows of heaven and the doors of earth were simultaneously opened wide. The hand of God and the heart of man came together.

He who hears the faintest whisper of believing prayer is, no doubt, giving answer to His children in thousands of instances every day, all the year round. If the materials could be gathered, the record of answered prayer in ordinary times would be interesting and instructive in the highest degree. But in those seasons, when the infirmities of the saints are specially helped by the extraordinary aids of the Spirit of grace, and answers come in measures heaped up and running over, the most meagre narrative could scarcely fail to be striking. At such a time, it is like the arrival of the foreign mail, when everybody who has a friend in the distant land is looking for and receiving a letter, and those who have large transactions, get whole packets. The ordinary mail brings the ordinary communication; but this brings budgets of good tidings, loving messages, and special tokens of friendship.

They who know the secret of true prayer are best able to bear testimony to the answer granted to their own requests. Many answers have been of late recorded, such as none can deny but those who utterly disbelieve in the power of prayer, or are so blinded by prejudice as to be incapable of perceiving a palpable fact. Many Christians, whose faith is not of yesterday, are able to tell how, during the past two years, the reckless youth, the self-complacent formalist, the drunkard, the profligate, the Sabbath-breaker, the scoffer, the sceptic, have, in answer to prayer, been turned to God. Ministers solemnly avouch that prayer has been answered for their congregations, teachers for their classes, parents for their children, sons and daughters for fathers and mothers, sister for sister, brother for brother, and friend for friend. The repeated public offering of thanksgiving, for the merciful responses of our Father in heaven, has indicated in part to the outside world the grateful acknowledgments of similar blessing that have been ascending, like clouds of incense, from the altar of the family, the secret chamber, and the silent heart. Our space will admit

only a few illustrative instances, and these shall consist of those for which the present writer can personally vouch.

Last year a widow, residing at a little distance from Dundee, stirred up by tidings of the work of grace to seek, as she had never done, the conversion of her four children, sent a request for prayer on their behalf, and for the strengthening of her own faith. One of the children was brought to the Saviour, and the mother's faith was strengthened. Again she requested prayer for the others, and again she gave herself to prayer. In a short space the whole four were turned to the Lord.

A lady requested prayer at the union meeting for a daughter resident in a foreign land. In a week a letter was received announcing the girl's conversion, which appeared to have taken place almost at the very hour when supplication was being made for her. Meanwhile prayer had been offered for the lady's other two daughters, both of whom shortly afterwards professed to have received Christ. The same person then requested prayer for a prodigal brother, who had wandered literally to a far country, and had been lost sight of for many years, his relatives not so much as knowing whether he were alive. Intercession was offered on his behalf at the daily prayer-meeting, and in August last year, six months afterwards, tidings arrived from Australia announcing that the lost brother was still alive, and had become a trophy of redeeming grace.

Deeply distressed for an ungodly son, who made a mock of things sacred, his parents sent to the daily prayer-meeting a request to be presented on his behalf. Not many hours had elapsed when the scoffer was found among the inquirers, a humbled man. A few days after saw him among the believers.

A mother prayed much for her two daughters; but as they gave no sign of spiritual anxiety, she turned her attention to the case of two unconverted neighbours, whose salvation she sought both by prayer and other means. At her urgent entreaty they accompanied her to one of the meetings; but to her sore

disappointment they returned home as they went, unbelieving and unmoved. What was her surprise and joy, to find her two daughters awakened! This to her was a better answer than she had expected to her prayer. The two inquirers shortly after this professed to believe on Jesus.

"I hope the answer is coming now," said a father one day last year, as he stood weeping and telling me of an awakened son, whose salvation had lain heavily on his heart for years. The issue was a happy one, being such as to justify the father's confidence, and to realize his expectations.

A mother was found weeping one day. They were tears of joy. "The last one of my seven children," said the happy mother, "has been brought to Jesus." First she had prayed for one, and then another, until her five sons and two daughters had all given evidence of having been born again. The Lord had said to her, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark."

At the *'all-day'* meeting in Dundee a gentleman rose up and made a statement that produced a deep impression. He said his three daughters attended the meetings in this town, whilst he and his wife remained at home. On the first night of their attendance, and at the hour of meeting, he and their mother retired to pray for their conversion. Often had they made intercession for the salvation of their daughters; now they solemnly resolved, in the strength of divine grace, that they would not leave the room where they knelt until they were enabled to lay their burden down at Jesus' feet, and leave it there. They continued to wrestle with God until they felt they could cast their burden on the Lord; and they left the room for the first time completely relieved in mind in regard to the conversion of their three children. Next night, retiring to pray, he said he could not realize the burden with which he had been so long familiar; and in vain did he stir himself up to pray for the conversion of his daughters, although when he entered on another subject of intercession he found liberty in regard to it. Next day, on

coming to Dundee, they met their daughters, who communicated to their father and mother the joyous tidings of their conversion. At the very hour when their parents were pleading with God for them they had been awakened to seek salvation. It would be difficult to describe the meeting of the parents and their children on that occasion. The father, an intelligent gentleman well known to many of those present, told this story of answered prayer with the deepest emotion, and the audience being in fullest sympathy with him were unable to conceal their tears.

Two lads who were turned to Christ here in the spring of 1874 became much concerned about the salvation of a young man, brother of one of them, who was sceptical but not a confirmed deist. In vain they spoke to him of the Saviour they had found; he would neither listen to them nor promise to come and hear the gospel with them. In their anxiety for him, and they seemed greatly burdened, they took counsel with the lady who had been their friend and adviser in the time of their spiritual distress. A little covenant was made, in which the two lads and their Christian friend solemnly pledged themselves to pray in secret every day for a week for the young sceptic's salvation. At the end of the week, to the astonishment of all who knew him, the young man appeared at an evangelistic meeting, at the close of which he took his place among the inquirers, frankly acknowledging his difficulties and desire to know the way of salvation. That very night he professed faith in Christ, and has ever since held on his way as an earnest disciple.

In still more numerous instances have young men been arrested in the midst of a course of utter recklessness, or even sheer profligacy, and converted in answer to prayer offered by a brother or other relative, when all means had failed, and hope itself seemed to be cut off. A single instance may be here given.

A young man attended one of the meetings, and was for the first time in his life made to feel, as he said, that the way of transgressors is hard. Like the Psalmist, he thought on his ways, and turned his feet unto the testimonies of God. He made haste, and delayed not. He was enabled to receive the Lord Jesus as his Saviour, and at once to separate himself from ungodly companions and take a decided stand for Christ. His first thought was about an unconverted brother in Glasgow. He resolved to pray for his conversion. Day after day for several weeks he pleaded with the Merciful One to have compassion on his wayward and prodigal brother and save him. One day as he thus prayed, it struck him that he ought to try and find out his brother, and see if the Lord had answered his prayers. Accordingly, with the little store of money he had saved from his hard-won earnings, he took his journey to Glasgow, and searched for his brother, who, like the rolling stone that gathers no moss, had been removing to and fro, in his restlessness and profligacy. At length finding him, he sat down beside him, and after a pause which neither of the brothers seemed disposed to break, the Dundee man said, "I want to tell you that I have found Christ, and that I am saved." Suddenly the countenance of the other lighted up, and he replied, "So am I. The Lord has saved me too." His story was soon told. He had let himself down to the lowest depths. He had even sold the last rag of his clothes, except a tattered working suit. He had got to the very swine-trough of the prodigal, when one night he was asked to go and hear the American evangelists. He angrily declined, saying he did not want to hear them. That night as he went along a street, steeped in misery, and not knowing what to do, he noticed the light streaming out of the windows of a church. There was a cheery look about the whole place; the door was open, and suddenly he felt a desire to enter. He went in. He heard the Word from the lips of some minister of the gospel. He knew not who it was that spoke. This, however, he knew in

his inmost heart, that Jesus the Son of God, the Friend of sinners, was speaking to him. Without making any attempt to improve his character or mend his ways before seeking the Saviour, he was enabled then and there to believe on Jesus, and to find salvation from his sins in believing. What a night of joy and fellowship these brothers spent! The Glasgow brother was now literally clothed as he had not been for many a day, and in the most blessed sense he was in his right mind. The Dundee brother had got his prayer answered, and he thought never had he spent his money to better purpose than in journeying to the great city of the west to find out if the Lord had heard his cry.

A Christian mother, residing at B——, in this neighbourhood, last spring (1874) became greatly burdened about the salvation of the unconverted members of her family, and was constrained to spend a night in prayer for them. Ere the morning dawned she felt assured, resting on the promise, that her prayer would be answered in the conversion of them all. The week following she received a letter from a daughter resident at C——, announcing the joyful tidings that her eyes had been opened to see herself as guilty, depraved, condemned, and that through grace she had been enabled to believe on Jesus to her unspeakable joy and victory over sin. It was stated also that the instrumentality which God had seen meet to employ for her conversion was a letter from a brother, an earnest disciple of Christ, and an office-bearer in a church in Dundee. Mary, another daughter, a servant at B——, a young woman of blameless morals, but destitute of saving grace, was next converted. One day in brief succession three letters came to Mary by post, one from her mother, the other two from other members of the family, all of them obviously without any pre-arrangement on the part of the writers, calling upon her with much earnestness and affection to turn to Christ and live. As she read each of the letters it was like successive blows, heavier and still heavier, till at length she

began to cry for mercy. In this state she continued, her sense of sin ever deepening, till the following Sabbath, when she went to Dundee, saw her brother, and opening her Bible with the three letters in it, said, "A——, look at that! I am a lost sinner. Oh, tell me what I am to do!" That night, at the close of the service, as she stood speaking to her brother in one of the aisles of the church, she was enabled, as she trusts, to lay hold on Christ, and begin the heavenward journey. Thus that mother's prayers were answered.

A minister much depressed on account of the languishing state of religion in his congregation requested that prayer might be made for himself and his people. To his astonishment, for, like that company of Primitive Christians who were praying for the release of Peter, he was not prepared to receive an answer, a blessing of large measure fell on his ministry. The whole congregation was stirred, and many professed to believe. Suddenly, and in a manner wholly unexpected, the awakening, with the clear impress of God's hand on it, took place.

Another minister, whose sphere of labour is in a secluded rural parish, in giving an account of a revival in his congregation in 1860, said it began in this way: He was engaged in study one Saturday, when, reflecting on the sad condition of his people, many of whom, hardened in heart by the unprofitable hearing of the gospel, seemed ready to perish, he suddenly resolved on casting aside his sermon and giving himself to prayer. He continued for five hours in fervent, importunate supplication. Next day he went into the pulpit with a strange feeling as if something unusual were about to happen. At the very beginning of public worship the congregation appeared to be solemnized and awed in no ordinary degree. At the close of the service the minister found to his amazement and joy several persons in a state of anxiety. It was the beginning of a great work of grace, the fruits of which were abundant and precious. Thus, that awakening, like many more, began in a *prayer-meeting of*

one. Revival often begins in the minister's closet; the secret of a successful congregational prayer-meeting is found in the same quarter. A *praying* people, it is said, makes a *preaching* minister; but it is no less true that a praying minister will make a praying people. And a praying people are like the iron when it is at a white heat; it is easy then to mould and fashion souls into all that is morally good. The minister who knows how to make the iron hot will not fail to strike and finish his work.

The recent awakening has produced marked effects in respect of prayer-meetings. The attendance in many instances has been greatly increased; the number of meetings has been multiplied in a remarkable degree; and their whole tone has been improved, in the deepened seriousness, the shorter prayers, the more direct and specific intercessions, the more hopeful spirit, and more genial gospel-like feeling by which they are now largely characterized.

Previously the prayer-meeting was too generally conducted on this wise: The minister leads off with a psalm, and a long, wearisome, *theologising* prayer, often of twenty minutes' length; then reads a chapter, and throws off a dry, helter-skelter commentary on a passage; the rear being brought up by an elder, who offers another long prayer, "concerning all things, and certain other things." The benediction brings the unhappy hour to a close. No wonder if in some instances the pastor deems it right to give the prayer-meeting a summer holiday; and as little wonder that such a meeting is never missed all the time. But even this is a thousand leagues in advance of the state of matters in those congregations where a prayer-meeting is unknown, where the spirit of prayer is so utterly gone that the degenerate sons of Presbyterianism are crying out in their helplessnesses for a liturgy. Oh that the civil power, to which they owe so much, would in its compassions bestow a little set of

forms upon them, so that they may not be left altogether prayerless!

A weekly lecture and prayer-meeting should not be combined in one; for the attempt is usually a failure, the service being neither one thing nor another. In some congregations an hour once a week, say Wednesday night, for a lecture or discourse on some experimental topic, and an hour, say on Friday night, wholly for prayer and praise with a little reading of the Word and an open half-hour with five minutes' addresses on Christian experience or work, answers all purposes sufficiently well.

The five plentics of the faithful pastor and prosperous congregations are—

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|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Plenty of Prayer, | } = 5. Plenty of Blessing. |
| 2. Plenty of Praise, | |
| 3. Plenty of Preaching, | |
| 4. Plenty of Practising, | |

Bo R. H.
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CHAPTER VIII.

THE EVANGELISTIC MEETING.

THE system of rotation of crops seems to be not more indispensable in agriculture than is the rotation of doctrine in the husbandry of the Church. The constitution of the human mind, the infirmity of faith, the exigencies of the Church, and the peculiar wants of each age, seem to render such a rotation necessary and wholesome. Whatever may be the explanation of the fact, the Holy Spirit has been pleased to employ different truths at different times for the furtherance of the gospel. There is ever a "present truth." Not to speak of the controversies that have agitated the Church from age to age, some of the great revivals prove and illustrate the point. In the days of the apostles the Holy Ghost appears to have largely used the fact of Christ's resurrection as sealing the truth of His atoning sacrifice. At the Reformation it was mainly Justification by Faith alone. In the days of Wesley and Whitefield it was Regeneration, or the second birth. In the great awakening in America and in this country some sixteen years ago, the one great matter to which, as by an invisible spell, all thoughts were directed, was the Power of Prayer. In the recent movement the leading feature of the teaching was simply *Grace*, viewed especially in its freeness. This was pre-eminently the characteristics of the

teaching of the American evangelists, both in respect of their preaching and singing the gospel.

It is the function of the pastor to set forth the truth in all its breadth and fulness, and with the greatest minuteness of detail. This is not to be expected at the hands of the evangelist. His part, the secret of his strength under God, lies in handling those simple, radical truths usually employed by the Holy Ghost in the awakening and conversion of sinners. To box the entire compass of theology in a single discourse is of all kinds of preaching the most feeble and ineffective. Not so did the Master preach. From the records of His teaching we gather that, in parable or in plain speech, He was wont to lift before the eyes of His audience in glorious isolation a single truth, which in its very solitariness shone and sparkled and impressed like a lone star in the firmament. A shower of sparks may dazzle, but for showing the way one little steady light is better. The preaching of some men seems to consist in nicely balancing one truth against another, like the panniers on the back of an ass. The effect is *nil*. What they do they undo. Every impression made they immediately efface. Every truth should be allowed to come down with its own weight. But such preachers shake off the drops that fall from their own watering-can, leaving the plants as dry as before. That is a foolish cunning. It is better to pierce consciences than to poise doctrines. If this applies to preaching generally, it bears emphatically on the teaching of the evangelist. His creed should be summed up in the three articles of the Apostolic Benediction—"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost." Certainly, these cardinal points of the gospel occupied the most prominent place not only in the teaching but in the whole tone of the recent movement. The three R's—Ruin by the fall, Redemption by the cross, and Regeneration by the Holy Spirit—were fully recognized, and clearly taught. For man, fallen, guilty, helpless, lost, there is no salvation but in

the grace of God. No removal of the least stain of guilt of the least guilty of mankind but by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. From the thralldom of sin there is no escape, not even for the most enlightened, the most amiable, or the most moral of Adam's race, but through the power of the Holy Ghost. Man's works have no merit; his wisdom, his strength, his righteousness, are of no avail. "Every mouth is stopped" before God. The efficacy of the blood of Christ, the exceeding glory and worth of His mediatorial sacrifice, have been constantly extolled. The marvellous love of God in the gift of His Son, the riches of divine grace, and the omnipotence of the Father's arm in the salvation of sinners, formed a never-ceasing theme. The absolute necessity of being born again; the grace, power, and work of the Holy Spirit,—were both the subject of frequent teaching and the burden of incessant prayer. The holiness of God, judgment to come, heaven and hell, have been set forth in the light of Scripture. The sanctities of the Christian life as flowing from the grace of God in the heart, truth, uprightness, purity, meekness, benevolence, and fruitfulness, in every branch of Christian activity, have never been overlooked.

When Mr. Moody, at the second of his "gospel-meetings" in Dundee, preached on one of his favourite texts, "There is no difference" (Rom. iii. 22), quoting also and applying the words, "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19), a man came up at the close and said he had been justifying himself all his days, but from that time he would cease, for his mouth was "stopped." Next day he appeared at the prayer-meeting to thank God for his salvation. There is no hope of a sinner's coming to Christ until his mouth is stopped. In how many instances of late has the voice of self-justification been silenced, and the mouth of believing confession opened by the Spirit of grace! In passing round the cells in a great American prison, the preacher said, with a fine

touch of irony, he had scarce ever met so many innocent people in one day during all his life. They had all been wrongfully condemned; they were all innocent; each one justified himself. Such is this world of blinded sinners, who, although "condemned already," labour each one to justify himself. Thus, in a rough but effective way, men in their sins had their portrait drawn; they had been quieting conscience with the sop of pride; and now many were fain to acknowledge that they had been justly committed to the cell of the condemned.

Frequently at the close of the evangelistic service, when the nature and necessity of regeneration by the Holy Ghost formed the subject of address, many persons, some of them of much intelligence, would come forward as inquirers. Although they had listened to similar teaching times without number before, never until then had they been awakened to a sense of their personal need of thorough renewal in the inner man. This fact plainly showed that the gospel was being preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. It is not uncommon for men in their sins to love to hear the truth in the letter of it; for then they can "hold the truth in unrighteousness." When the Holy Spirit comes with the truth, if they are not awakened to inquiry, they will be aroused to anger. They can bear the truth because they can manage it; but the living, convincing Spirit they cannot bear.

The preaching of the cross, which to many is foolishness, was often manifestly the power of God unto salvation. The simple, unadorned statement of the great Bible truth, the very heart and soul of the gospel, the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, was reiterated with primitive plainness and divine unction. The "theology of the blood," so offensive to the ears of many, was accompanied with such power that scarcely did the dog of rationalism dare to wag his tongue.

But most of all, it was in the illustration of God's love in Christ to a world of sinners that the word came with heart-

piercing energy and persuasive grace: Here the preacher revelled, his power apparently lying in picturing the riches and freeness and matchless tenderness of the grace of God, and in showing how the Father's love, when received by faith into the heart, purifies, sweetens, and subdues all to itself. Many a time when the gospel was thus being proclaimed and illustrated the Spirit of the Lord seemed to fall upon the people in a moment, hearts were opened and won, and tears were poured out in floods. Reuben Johnson* had been so long in prison that when the happy lot that was to bring liberty to a favoured few fell on him, he did not answer to his own name when it was called out. It seemed too good to be true; it could not be he, though it was his name, and there was no other to claim it. So, said the preacher, when God in His love calls to the sinner by his name, "Who-soever will," the sinner, conscious of guilt, cannot believe it is himself; it seems too good to be true.

The whole teaching at these gospel meetings may be summed up in three texts of Scripture. First, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" secondly, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" and lastly, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

A prominent and peculiar feature of these recent services has been the singing of the gospel. This being regarded as an innovation, has proved a stumbling-block to some. But why should not the gospel be sung? Did not David the king sing it of old for the good of all who had ears to hear his song, saints or sinners? Do they not sing in heaven of the love of God and the blood of the Lamb? Down in this sorrowful world might we not with advantage have more of the same song?

* This man, sentenced to imprisonment for life, had lain in an American jail for many years, when the highest authority in the State cancelled the sentence and ordered him to be set at liberty.

The gospel contains all the elements of the purest song. Was ever story so pathetic and thrilling? Was ever life-history so full of love and sorrow? Was ever death so tragic, so tender, so sublime? Did ever mystery and simplicity so mingle together? Were ever the awful and the familiar, the divine and the human, so blended into one? This strange, unique, matchless life, at once so heavenly and so homely, so full of strength and tenderness, so free of sin, and so full of love to sinners, glowing all over with burning holiness, yet moistened throughout with sympathetic tears, is it not the truest poetry, the purest and warmest song? This great mystery of godliness, so full of beauty, and marvel, and contrast, chequered with infinite heights and depths, from the Father's bosom down to the manger and the cross, and from the grave up to the throne of the universe, gathering into one all the harmonies of earth and heaven—who wonders that this is the master-note that thrills every voice in the song of eternity? This redemption that is in Christ Jesus, the widest of all schemes, the noblest of all enterprises, the most beneficent of all works, summing up the whole past, giving the present its only true meaning and value, and lighting up the future with inconceivable glories—who that knows it in his soul can refrain from singing it forth to others, all the while making melody of it in his own heart unto the Lord? There never was a story told, there never was a book written, there never was a poem sung, that equals the “glad tidings of great joy” for love and truth, for power and sweetness. And, therefore, there never was a tale or theme that so much deserves to be sung in strains of richest melody as the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. The angels sang Jesus into the world, and the little children hosannaed Him into Jerusalem. Let us add the testimony of our songs, and all the more that His cause is still in the manger, or still riding in lowliest fashion in the midst of a world of envious Pharisees and angry scoffers, only too ready to cry, “Away with Him! away with Him! Crucify Him! crucify Him!”

The two functions of sacred song are the glorifying of God and the edifying of men. There are two kinds of song, the devotional and the didactic. The devotional song, even in its most direct ascription of praise to God, may be and often is instructive and edifying in the highest degree. On the other hand, the didactic or teaching song, while its purpose is to convey instruction, may breathe the warmest spirit of devotion, and waken all the daughters of praise. We may praise the Lord by singing to Him. We may praise Him no less by singing of Him to ourselves or others; and none the less do we praise Him, when at the same time we edify ourselves and admonish one another.

The sweet singer of Israel made use of spiritual song for the good of various classes. His fellow-saints, the young and rising generation, and the unbelieving world outside, are each addressed in turn: "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul," is the key-note of many a psalm, in which his fervid genius, aiming at the edification of believers, pours forth in pathetic and impressive strains the deepest experiences of the soul. For the instruction and godly upbringing of the young, the psalmist tunes his harp and directs his song: "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." King David never occupied a nobler position than when he thus stood as the Sabbath-school teacher, and sang of the way of life to the little ones.

In the New Testament, believers are exhorted to edify themselves and one another by the singing of psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. This form of "teaching and admonishing one another," previously little used among us as a specific means of grace, has of late been to thousands of Christians like the opening of fountains in the wilderness. Without giving up one iota of the purest simplicity of worship, we may surely take advantage of this divinely-ordained means of edification. As a vehicle for conveying truth, for rendering it impressive and

memorable, for calling into play the emotional forces that lie in the mysterious region of the will, and for setting in motion the springs of activity, spiritual song cannot be too highly valued. For binding believers together in the threefold bond of faith, hope, and charity; for inspiring them with the *true esprit de corps*; for furthering them in knowledge, comfort, and holiness,—the singing of the truth as it is in Jesus and of the common experience is found to be of high practical value, as the ripest saints can testify. Many of these hymns and songs, the fruit of sanctified genius, embodying in a few verses the substance of many an eloquent discourse on gospel or epistle, pour into the heart in warm streams the most precious truths, and the most powerful and affecting inducements to a life of faith, patience, and joyful hope. Care must be taken of course, that the singing does not degenerate into a mere carnal entertainment, or become the occasion of a mere luxuriating in fine feelings. Singing, like praying, should not be divorced from working. If “prayer and pains” are fitly yoked together, singing and serving are a well-matched pair.

“Mine is a lowly lot,
But still I work and sing;
For though the world regard me not,
My Father is a King.”

Why may not the gospel be sung too for the converting of sinners? The singing of the glad tidings may be abused; so may every good thing, not excepting even the grace of God. The effect of sweet sounds upon the imagination and the heart may be deceptive and fleeting; so too may be the impressions of rhetoric or the effect of the most unimpassioned logic. Nothing, indeed, is more commonly abused than convictions of truth fastened on the mind by a process of reasoning. Many read the epistle to the Romans, and yield to the resistless force of the apostle's logic, but go on in their worldly course, “holding

that mere emotion is not mistaken for conversion, just as care must be taken that the purely intellectual assent to the truth effected by logic is not substituted for that sense of sin which lies at the root of all true repentance; for it is "with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness."

Some object to reading sermons because, as they think, the natural tendency of that method of proclaiming the truth is to a cold intellectualism, to spiritual death. Singing the gospel lies at the other extreme, and its natural tendency would be to mere emotionalism. But as it was said of Chalmers' preaching, "it was *fell** reading," so it may justly be maintained that the singing of the American evangelist is altogether exceptional. Beyond question, whilst the world lasts the chief means of making known the gospel will be by preaching; and although the preaching be oftentimes in utterances inharmonious and prosaic, the word of the Lord shall in this manner have "free course and be glorified." But as in nature there is room for the warbling of birds and the murmur of brooks, as well as the trumpet-tongues of the mighty winds and the loud-resounding voices of the sea, so surely in the world's evangelisation there is a place for this use of consecrated song amidst the more commanding instrumentalities of eloquent speech and learned teaching. And if whole nations have been educated to patriotism and deeds of renown by means of a few songs, should not this gift, with all its spiritual capabilities, be laid by the Church on the altar of her God?

In bringing the gospel to bear on the masses of our home-heathen nothing is more difficult, as all know who have put their hand to that work, than the preliminary business of procuring a hearing for our message. If some of our brethren who are located in the pleasanter parts of the field were summoned to these high places of battle with sin and Satan, they would be little disposed to quarrel about the employment of extraordinary

* *Scottish* for tremendous, extraordinary.

or eccentric methods of sounding the trumpet of alarm in the ears of religious indifference and practical atheism. Amongst other subordinate methods we have found the use of hallowed song of great value. Like Iceland, with its eternal snows and boiling springs, stern and rugged natures often conceal in their depths fountains of tenderness which even the ungodliness and vice of our large cities do not wholly dry up. For the religious education of the Scottish people we have largely availed ourselves of the metaphysical bias of the national mind, and there is no reason why we may not for the highest ends with due prudence take advantage of the emotional susceptibilities of our race. And if there are human beings so terribly hardened by sin that there is no avenue to any mind or heart remaining in them save some sense of pleasure in the hearing of musical sounds, who shall forbid us to pour through that last aperture the wondrous harmonies of redeeming love, leaving the rest to Him who can quicken the "dead in trespasses and sins"? At any rate, at the street corner, in the crowded market-place, in the dingy, fever-smitten, and seemingly God-forsaken courts and lanes, where Satan bears absolute sway,—even there, amidst universal rottenness, where gown and bands would only excite ridicule, where the very pink of systematic theology would grow pale, and the choicest rhetoric would fall like snowflakes in the gutter,—the singing of a spiritual song has arrested the attention of thief, and profligate, and prostitute, and scoffer, and led in unquestionable instances to some being washed and sanctified and saved.

Of many instances of awakening or conversion through the singing, a few may be given.

At Dundee, last year, a gay, thoughtless young woman was one day invited by an acquaintance to accompany her to a meeting. She declined to go, saying that she did not care to hear Moody and Sankey. On being further pressed, she consented and went. She was not impressed by anything she

heard in the course of the meeting. Indeed, she thought there was "nothing in it," and wondered why people should make so much ado about what seemed so commonplace. The last hymn, "Yet there is Room!" was being sung by Mr. Sankey alone. He had reached the last stanza—

"Ere night that gate may close, and seal thy doom,
Then the last, low, long cry, 'No room! no room!'
No room, no room; oh, woful cry, 'No room!'"

These last words of Dr. Bonar's hymn fell upon the ear of the young woman like a sudden thunder-clap. She left the meeting, but the words went with her. "No room! no room!" still rang in her ears. Conscience awoke at the sound of this warning bell. Nor could she rest, until, as she trusts, she found rest in the great Redeemer.

A young woman went to a meeting in this town, where she heard Mr. Sankey singing the children's hymn—

"I am so glad that our Father in heaven
Tells of His love in the Book He has given:
Wonderful things in the Bible I see;
This is the dearest, that Jesus loves me.
I am so glad that Jesus loves me,
Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me, even me."

While the hymn was being sung, she began to feel for the first time in her life that she was a sinner. All her sins came up in array before her; and so numerous and aggravated did her sins appear, that she imagined she could never be saved. "Jesus cannot love me," she said in her heart; "He could not love a sinner such as me." She went home in a state of extreme mental anguish, and did not sleep that night. Every opportunity of obtaining more light was seized by her. Along with some others she took her place as an inquirer. Here she found to her astonishment and her joy that Jesus could love sinners, that He did love sinners—nay, that He does still love sinners. She saw in the light of the Word of God that it was for sinners that

Jesus died, and for none others. When she learned this she too began to sing—

“I am so glad that Jesus loves me,
Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me, even me.”

Quiet, thoughtful, modest, and in every respect a consistent disciple of Jesus, she is now a member of a church here, and is much esteemed by her fellow-Christians.

A working man was awakened in the Free Trade Hall at Manchester by the singing of the hymn, “Safe in the Arms of Jesus.” He tells how he sang the first verse carelessly through, but that when he came to the second, “Safe from corroding care,” he was suddenly brought to a standstill. The people all around him were evidently in earnest, they meant what they were singing; it was not so with him. He looked at the verse. He felt he could not sing it with truth; for him to sing it was sheer mockery. So he sat down in great trouble. “That night,” he says, “I went home in agony. Next morning I went to my work; but I had not got over the trouble. My shopmates saw there was something up with me. They asked, ‘What was the trouble?’ I told them, My soul! my soul! Two nights after I was no better. I went again to the meeting; there I heard I must look to Christ, and Him alone. Just then I was enabled to look; I went home, rejoicing in the Lord, a new and happy man.”

At Dublin an old gentleman upwards of seventy years of age was found on his knees sobbing like a child. “I was utterly careless about my soul till last night,” he said; “but I have been so unhappy since, I could not sleep. I seemed to hear ringing in my ears, ‘Jesus of Nazareth is passing by,’ and if I do not get saved now I never shall be.”

Apart from conversion there are many persons who frankly acknowledge that the singing of the gospel in the recent movement had the effect of removing their prejudices against spiritual religion. The singing to them was in truth so far a message

from God. At an open-air meeting at Keith, I observed the people listening to the preacher with a hard, critical air; but when Sankey sang "The Ninety and Nine," these sons of the soil, the most hard-headed people in the world, broke completely down, and the harsh, captious spirit seemed to give way entirely as he sang—

"Lord, whence are those blood-drops all the way
That mark out the mountain's track?
'They were shed for one who had gone astray
Ere the Shepherd could bring him back.'
'Lord, whence are Thy hands so rent and torn?'
'They are pierced to-night by many a thorn.'"

X.B. Not a few thus impressed remained to be conversed with. Whether it is by a sermon, or a song, or a sickness, or a sorrow, or a dream, or any one of the ten thousand things, great or trivial, employed by the Holy Spirit to awaken men, when they do break down, when they open out in conversation, or are set a-going in earnest, it is a clear gain in the work of God.

Nor is this singing of the truth wholly a novelty; for ever since the awakening in 1859 some of our evangelists have employed it with good results. One, for instance, taken from the plough to draw deep furrows in men's hearts, has once and again succeeded in reaching the ears of the rough occupants of the bothy, when all other means had failed, by his simple gospel songs; and so hearts were won.

X.B. In the manner of conducting evangelistic meetings generally there has been marked improvement of late years. The pulpit has been coming down from its high horse of fine theological disquisition, and essay reading, and has been speaking to the children, the illiterate, and all of weaker capacity, in a style more after the manner of Him whom the common people heard gladly. Cromwell advised his soldiers to "fire low." There is still room in the preaching for lowering the fire, so

as to hit better; and this happily can be done without lowering the dignity of the message or the messenger. The truth is exalted when it is brought down, after the manner of the Master, to the level of the understanding of the multitude. The glory of the message lies not a little in the matchless simplicity of the gospel; and the true dignity of style consists mainly in our coming down, or rather our rising up, into that divine simplicity. He who cannot speak in the clear, strong language of everyday life, using natural and homely metaphor, anecdote, and parable, has yet to learn to preach to the people.

The use of gospel meetings, and of specific evangelistic agencies, has greatly increased since the revival sixteen years ago. We have the Scottish Evangelistic Association,* which sprang out of that great work of grace, and whose agents have rendered invaluable service in the furtherance of the gospel throughout the land. Some of the evangelists of that society—I speak from personal knowledge of the facts—have been instrumental in arousing congregations, in awakening whole communities, in gathering many hundreds to the Saviour, and in strengthening faithful pastors and churches. Some of the larger religious bodies, such as the Free Church and United Presbyterian Church, employ a regular staff of lay-evangelists. This, so far, is well; but the Church will never be thoroughly equipped until she has re-established on a proper scriptural basis the office of the evangelist, and has set apart for that service men qualified and trained for the work, and placed on a footing of equality with the ordained ministers.

The number of agencies now employed in this kind of work is immense. Lay-missionaries, student-missionaries, itinerant evangelists, colporteurs, Bible-women, and a mighty host of volunteers, including office-bearers of the churches, street-

* Ably managed by Captain Mackenzie and a committee of ministers and other gentlemen, representing all the evangelical bodies.

preachers, and other helps, all contribute their part in conducting gospel meetings, or other evangelistic services for making the Saviour known to sinners. This army of Christian workers has been called into active service, in a large measure, since 1859. The success of the gospel meetings of the American evangelists was very largely due to those agencies, and the efforts generally of a revived ministry and a quickened church.



CHAPTER IX.

THE INQUIRY-MEETING.

"NOW I saw in my dream," says Bunyan, "that just as they had ended their talk, they drew nigh to a very miry slough, that was in the midst of the plain; and they being heedless did both suddenly fall into the bog. The name of the slough was Despond. Here therefore they wallowed for a time, being grievously bedaubed with dirt; and Christian, because of the burden that was on his back, began to sink in the mire. Then said Pliable, Ah! neighbour Christian, where are you now? Truly, said Christian, I do not know."

"This miry slough," we are informed a little further on in the allegory, "is such a place as cannot be mended; it is the descent whither the scum and filth that attends conviction of sin doth continually run, and therefore it is called the Slough of Despond; for still, as the sinner is awakened about his lost condition, there arise in his soul many fears, and doubts, and discouraging apprehensions, which all of them get together, and settle in this place. And this is the reason of the badness of the ground." Much has been done, as the dreamer tells, to mend the bog, but it is as bad as ever. Awakened sinners are as prone to fall into it in our day as they were eighteen hundred years ago, when so many thousands were sinking in it, and the first great evangelistic service was of necessity resolved into an inquiry-meeting.

The place of inquiry may be the open-air, as when, in the wilderness or on the banks of Jordan, the people, the publicans, and the soldiers, awakened under the preaching of the Baptist, stated their difficulties, and John cut the knot in each case in his own decisive way. Or the inquiry-room may be the street or the temple porch, as when Peter dealt with the three thousand inquirers, and answered the question, "Men and brethren, what must we do?" Or it may be in a chariot, as when Philip instructed the eunuch; or in a jail, as when Paul answered the question of the awakened jailer; or in a private room, as when the same apostle answered the questions of his inquiring countrymen in "his own hired house" at Rome.

Some imagine, or affect to believe, that an inquiry-meeting is a kind of confessional. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is no priest, no confession of sin, and no absolution. There is no secrecy, no mystery, and nothing in the conversation that might not be proclaimed from the housetop. On the part of the inquirer it is in substance the asking of the question, "What must I do to be saved?" On the part of the Christian worker it is the opening up of the divinely-inspired answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," in an honest attempt to explain the simple plan of salvation with earnest prayer for the teaching and grace of the Holy Spirit. Conversation, or a free, friendly discussion involving question and answer on the one side and on the other, has been a recognized mode of instruction since the days of Socrates, ay, even since the time of the patriarch Job. In fact, for the elucidation and communication of truth, the catechetical method, or in other words conversation, is not excelled by any of the other modes of instruction, and possesses invaluable advantages of its own. The decay of this method indicates, we fear, the advent of a shallower age, or at least an age whose knowledge is at once more extensive and less profound. At all events, if for one half of our sermonising we could substitute the old-

fashioned diet of catechising, there would be a clear gain to fulness and accuracy of religious knowledge, and inquiry-meetings would be at once less a novelty and less a necessity. Meanwhile, there is surely nothing unreasonable or unscriptural in persons competent in point of knowledge and Christian wisdom giving answer to the urgent question of the inquirer, What am I to do to obtain salvation?

"At a fountain in one of your streets," said Mr. Moody, "a stranger from the country sought to refresh himself the other day. There he stood with the empty cup in his hand vainly endeavouring to fill it; he did not know how to touch the secret spring. At length despairing, for not a drop would come, he threw down the cup and was going away. A little shoe-black, taking pity on him, touched the spring with his dirty thumb, and out gushed the water in a crystal stream. Now, that dirty little shoe-black did better than a bishop could, if the bishop did not know how to touch the spring. Why then should not one who knows the way of salvation explain it to one who does not know?"

Dealing with inquirers is difficult work, the most difficult perhaps within the circle of Christian effort. Few are able to trace the subtle movements of the human soul, especially when it becomes the theatre of a spiritual war. When the spirit and the flesh, truth and error, the love of sin and its recoil on the conscience, the tangible, ever-present, all-powerful interests of time, and the more distant but tremendous realities of eternity strive for the mastery, the conflict is terribly real. Let not the eye of idle curiosity look on this momentous struggle; let no fool intermeddle with this awful strife. Grim and ghastly memories of the past, present evil in portentous shapes, and ominous forebodings of judgment to come, mingle in the scene. When fears, stings of self-reproach, pangs of remorse, the bitterness of wounded pride, the gall and wormwood of baffled effort, the sense of God's wrath, and the shadows of despair possess

the soul, one can understand the psalmist's experience—"The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me."

There are some who enter the kingdom of God with scarce a struggle. They are born in great peace. Their light comes in like a fair summer morning. Like Caesar Malan, they are wakened up to a new life, under the quickening breath of divine love, as a babe is wakened by its mother's kiss. The Holy Spirit leads them gently, even as a tender nurse leads a delicate child, and they learn to walk almost without a fall. But the trouble will come; the battle must be fought one day. There is no crown where there is no victory, and no victory where there is no conflict. To some the bitterness of life's cup lies at the bottom; but it is in the cup to all. If sharp pangs of conviction come not before conversion, or in conversion, they will assuredly come afterwards. This knowledge of sin is one of the fine accomplishments of the saint, and must be learned some day, and somehow. True it is indeed that the way of salvation is plain to the enlightened eye, and easy to the foot of faith; but so long as man is what he is; so long as ignorance and pride, unbelief and foolishness, are bound up in the heart; so long as the great adversary is master of the situation—and he is master, aye, until cast out by a stronger than he—so long will awakened souls be found in the Slough of Despond, floundering in the mire, and unable even to see the steps.

Now, under God, to guide the oppressed and struggling spirit in the line of safety, to raise no false battle-cry, to display no ill-omened flag of truce, to hurry on no unholy peace, to shout no premature cry of victory, and yet to press the banner of the cross to the forefront, to sound the trumpet call of immediate decision, and urge the matter to a speedy and successful issue on the side of truth, is a task demanding the highest Christian wisdom. To discover and expose the crafty shifts of an awakened soul, in its restless wanderings within the enchanted

circle of dead works, needs no little skill. For this work it is not enough to possess clear views of the way of salvation; knowledge of human nature and Christian experience are needed no less. To guide the inquirer, it is often necessary not only to teach, but also to contend. Error in its most refined and truth-like forms, sin in its most subtle and deceptive guises, unbelief all the more fiendish that it is clothed as an angel of light, and the prince of darkness making a final stand for his trembling empire, conspire for the mastery of the soul at the time of its most earnest inquiry and most agonizing efforts to escape. In contending with principalities and powers on the *terra incognita*, the mist-shrouded field of the inquirer's heart, your efforts will sometimes be baffled and your weapons shivered, and you will be made to feel as helpless as you would in a personal conflict with Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation. You can only cry to the Captain of salvation for succour. Hence, all other things being equal, the best qualified guide of the inquirer is the believer who is filled with the Spirit. Such an one alone possesses the needful skill, courage, sympathy, and faith. Even such an one, although he stands in the full light of God, panoplied over with all grace, will sometimes be foiled and beaten, and compelled to leave the inquirer in the hands of Him to whom nothing is too hard. You are made to feel the force, if you do not quite comprehend the meaning, of the Lord's words, "This kind goeth not forth but by prayer and fasting."

There are many cases of inquiry, however, with which any well-instructed Christian is competent to deal. It is often simply a case of pointing to the finger-post, and spelling out the words on which light from above is falling: "I AM THE WAY."

A meeting for inquirers ought to be an established institution in every church. In every prosperous Sabbath-school, and in every godly family, there will be an inquiry-room. The right-minded pastor's study will be open to every Nicodemus, to all who come saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." The minister who

never sees the face of an inquirer may well become an inquirer himself, and ask, "Have I lost the way? or have I ever been on the way at all?" Everywhere, and all the year round, we shall find, if we but take a little pains to seek them, men with a trouble on their consciences. The man who does not see this is himself sorely in need of light.

If I might presume to counsel the counsel-givers, I should say—

1. *Be in full sympathy with the Holy Ghost.* Be filled with the Spirit. Trust Him, honour Him. Place yourself meekly and reverently in His hands. Bear in mind your own utter impotence. Pray to the Spirit for His guidance and blessing. Beware of going before Him; follow where He leads, pressing on in the very footprints of His teaching and work. One word in the Spirit is often more effective than a thousand words of mere carnal reason. One hit on the head of the nail is better than a thousand side hits. "In the Spirit" secures the faith, the love, the tenderness, the spiritual insight, the singleness of eye, the patience, and the tact, which the Holy Ghost is wont to use for His own ends in this work.

2. *Be in sympathy with your inquirer.* Place yourself outside the gate with him, and knock as for your own life. Go into the darkness and grope with him. Descend into the depths and agonize with him. Place yourself on the brink of destruction, and take him by the hand, saying, "Let us escape." Be tender and weep with him. Next to the force of truth and the power of the Holy Ghost is the might of sympathy.

3. *Ever bring the inquirer to the Word of God.* First and last let the question be, "What saith the Lord?" "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making

wise the simple." "The entrance of thy word giveth light."
"He sent His word, and healed them."

4. *Aim at bringing your inquirer face to face with Jesus in the Word.* No sinner on earth, convinced or unconvinced, can at too early a moment be instructed in the knowledge of the Saviour. We need not fear to begin too soon with Him who is Alpha. The law is to be used; but there is a wise use of the gospel that includes the most effective use of the law. At any rate, it is yours to stand beside the cross and say, "Behold the Lamb of God!" While the inquirer cries for *Christ in the heart*, you must still direct him to Christ in the Word.

5. *Be swift to hear and slow to speak.* It is a conversation, not a lecture. The inquiry-room is more for searching than sermonising. In this work, a good hearer is better than a glib talker. A sentinel in the dark needs a quick ear. A watchman may talk well, but he should not be deaf. He who sounds the heart should know how to use the stethoscope.

6. *Strive above all things to find out the inquirer's difficulty,* otherwise your counsels may only be like spreading the sail before the anchor is weighed. Unless you speak to the difficulty, in effect you do but speak in an unknown tongue. Unless you know where the shoe pinches, you are not likely to be instrumental in bringing relief. In your ignorance of the particular seat of the disease your whole treatment may be empirical, a mere experimenting on your patient, prescribing medicine when food is requisite, or putting on a plaister where the lance is required. To find out the difficulty is, in short, the main business. Unless you are able to cast up the log, and ascertain the latitude and longitude of the inquirer's whereabouts, you will make but a sorry pilot on so wide and troubled a sea. No gift of the Spirit is more valuable than this faculty of discernment, this skill in soul diagnosis. He who possesses this spiritual intuition is best able to minister the gospel, is the best steward of the grace of God. Often when the difficulty is dis-

covered the work is done. Difficulties may be divided into three classes, the *doctrinal*, the *experimental*, and the *practical*. Keeping this in mind may help you.

7. *Use your own experience without laying it down as a rule or holding it up as a pattern.* An illustration is a window, not a foundation; beware of founding on sky-lights. Your experience is but footprints on the king's highway; not the highway. It may be easy for me to walk on that highway; it may be impossible for me to walk in *your* steps.

8. *Beware of using unsuitable texts or misapplying Scripture.* Do not apply to an inquirer the word spoken only to a believer. To misapply a text may be to mislead a soul. To misinterpret a Scripture may lead the wanderer further astray. Have a care, lest, in your eagerness to explain a difficult passage and comfort the anxious soul, your teaching should in effect be, "Believe that you are saved, and you are saved." It is another and a very different thing to say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The sinner's warrant to take Christ may be found in a hundred Scriptures as clear as day, without our having recourse to those passages that give rise to the most profound and difficult questions in theology.

9. *Do not press the inquirer too much.* Under the pressure a gentle spirit may yield, not to the force of truth or the grace of God, but to the violence of the guide. "I believe" may be said in haste and repented of in leisure. To heal the wound once badly healed is always difficult, often the hardest of all things. Frequently the worst scepticism in the world is the scepticism of the man who once thought he was a believer and has found out he is all wrong. There is no answering his, "But what if——?"

10. *Beware of healing the wound slightly.* Do not flatter the inquirer. Be not afraid to wound deeply, or to drive the anxious one to self-despair. The inquirer will make an idol of his anxiety, a refuge of his good resolution. Be an iconoclast; break every

idol. Ruthlessly expose every false refuge. But when you have done your part, a difficulty remains which you cannot remove, a mystery you cannot clear up. That mystery, the point of junction of the two roads, the broad and the narrow, is known only to the Spirit of God; that difficulty, the actual passing from the one to the other, can be overcome only by divine grace. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

11. *Persevere with your case.* In teaching a child the alphabet you would exercise patience. Here is a soul trembling between the two poles of eternal destiny, and should we not take the greatest pains? Here many Christian workers fail. They pilot their ship to the harbour's mouth and leave it sticking there. It is easier to steer a vessel over a thousand leagues of open sea, than guide it safely over a narrow and dangerous bar. Here as elsewhere "be not weary in well doing."

12. *Labour to bring the matter to a clear issue.* Do not accept of any excuse for delay or present indecision. Put before the inquirer the only alternative, the acceptance or the rejection of the Saviour. Leave the rest with God.

13. *Never pronounce judgment on the case.* Leave to the inquirer the entire responsibility of assuming the profession of a believer.

In dealing with inquirers a thousand shades of difficulty, in regard to the plan of salvation and its simple acceptance, will come to view. Of the millions of human beings saved, there never was one saved in precisely the way anticipated by himself. The trouble ever is to lay aside one's own plan, and fall in with the plan of God. "Go to," says the earnest seeker, "let the righteousness of God be the warp, and let my righteousness be the woof." The result, of course, is only a mass of tangled and broken threads. "Well then, suffer me to bind a little fringe on the fair robe of this divine righteousness, or at least to mark

my name on it." "No, not a single stitch. Thou shalt never mark thy name on it. He who made it alone shall mark thy name on it." "At any rate, let me have the little glory of putting it on myself." "Nay, thou never canst put it on thyself; the hands that wove and finished the garment alone can put it on thee." "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

For illustration, take the case of a young man who passed through a protracted struggle. He knew the truth in the letter of it; but on his being awakened, his intellectual light seemed to go clean out, or was useless in so deep a darkness. Pierced by a sense of sin, he sought justification by prayer, spending hours at that exercise. Finding no relief, he added to his praying fasting of the most severe kind. Nothing bettered, he separated himself from all society, and gave himself to the study of the Word of God. Now he began to watch his thoughts, and to regulate his every breath and pulsation of life by a rule of awful sternness. Still peace fled from him, and this "pitiful old self-holiness" shook beneath his feet like a rotten plank. Next he betook himself to doing good, visiting the sick and the afflicted, bestowing alms and giving away even his last shilling. It was all in vain. At length the light began to dawn upon his mind, and he saw that salvation is the free gift of God. He then set himself to the acceptance of the gift in the same spirit as he would the keeping of a hard commandment. He would accept salvation with a solemn resolution to lead a holy life. This was the systematic introduction of the dead fly into the good ointment of the apothecary; it was still in measure salvation by works. Having utterly failed, he arrived at the conclusion that if he but accepted salvation without any vow of amendment, and with a thankful heart, his soul at length should be at peace. Ah! that condition, a *thankful heart*, was as hard as anything in all the law of Moses. Instead of simply grasping the freely offered hand of Jesus, it was like cutting off a finger and flinging it to the Saviour as a proof of confidence. It was

like a criminal condemned to death offering to buy his life from the king by promising to ring a bell in honour of his own escape. At last he ended where he should have begun, by simply, unreservedly, and without any condition, casting himself on the mercy of God in Christ, and so found rest.

It can hardly fail to have escaped the observation of those who have had large experience in the work of dealing with inquirers how exceedingly small a matter may stand in the way of the sinner's closing with Christ. The whole strength of the cable of unbelief seems to lie in the last unbroken strand. The whole force of sin in the beleagured soul seems to crowd itself into the remaining uncaptured fort. Pride may hide itself in a very little corner. A little lie for a refuge may be as damning as a great one. Some slight condition of works cherished by the inquirer may be as real a covenant with hell as the utter rejection of the gospel.

There is a large class of inquirers whose difficulties are experimental. Two or three instances that have occurred under the present writer's observation may be adduced.

The first, a young man who said he could not believe. We argued the point often and long. We had recourse to Scripture. The grounds of faith were laid bare; the origin and nature of faith were made patent; the simplicity and the reasonableness of faith were clearly stated and illustrated by examples; and the wickedness and folly of unbelief were fully exposed. It was all in vain. As often as the inquirer was shut up to faith he terminated the argument by saying, "But I cannot believe." One night he finished the discussion as usual, by saying, "You know I am not able of myself to believe; what then am I to do?" After a pause, during which I silently prayed for direction, for I was baffled, I said very solemnly, "There remains nothing to be done. It is simply this, 'He that believeth not shall be damned.'" Had the ground beneath the feet of the young man suddenly given way he could not

have exhibited greater astonishment. All arguing was now at an end. When he had recovered himself from what seemed to be a blow from an unseen hand, he replied, "I admit it; there is nothing left but that I should be damned." From that moment he began, as he thinks, to believe; and certainly his subsequent-course has not belied his profession. The lie here was the abuse of an important truth. Under cover of the truth that of his own power he was not able to believe, he was all the time trying to conceal the sin and danger of his unbelief. From this false refuge he was driven forth, as he now hopes, by the simple Word of God, and the power of the Holy Ghost.

Take another instance illustrative of the same class of difficulties. It is the case of a man who said *there was something wrong with his faith.* "I know I am a sinner," he said. "I see clearly there is no salvation for me except in Christ. I do not doubt the truth of the gospel; I believe all about Jesus dying in the room of sinners. So far as I know my own heart I am trusting in the Saviour, and in no other, and have given up every sinful practice; but here is the thing that troubles me, I have none of that happiness that Christians speak of—I have no joy at all. I think, Surely there must be something wrong with my faith." To this I made reply, "Perhaps you are mistaken about the joy of the Christian. It is not necessarily a tumultuous emotion, an exuberant pleasure, or a strong passion of delight. It may be, it often is, a quiet satisfaction, a calm, restful gladness, a peaceful and contented frame, and yet in its nature a 'joy unspeakable.'" To this view of the matter the inquirer signified his assent. "Well, then," I went on to say, "let us imagine a case. You are on your way home to-night, and you are meditating and saying in your heart, Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour; He saves the chief of sinners; His blood cleanseth from all sin. . I am trusting in Him, I am His; He is mine, His righteousness is mine, His Spirit is mine to sanctify,

to guide, to comfort me, to dwell in me for ever. His love so free, so unchanging, is mine. God is my God and my Father; He will never leave me nor forsake me. God is my salvation: what a salvation! The promises are mine. Heaven is mine. As you are thus meditating, would you not be pleased, satisfied, glad?" By this time the man's countenance was lighted up. "Glad!" he exclaimed; "I am happy already, thinking about it." "Trusting in Christ?" I asked. "Yes, yes; trusting in Christ," he replied. "I never was happy in this way before." He went away quite relieved; rejoicing, as it seemed to himself and to me, *in the Lord*. His error lay in looking for the joy in *his faith*, instead of finding the joy in Christ. Hence he had been keeping his eye stedfastly gazing into his own heart to see if the joy would spring up. Looking to Jesus, the rest and gladness followed.

On one occasion I spent nearly two hours with a lady of great intelligence, whose difficulty I utterly failed to discover. Apparently there was no difficulty at all, and yet she was suffering acute mental distress. At last, when foiled, I prayed in my heart that light from above might be shed on the hindrance. Suddenly I thought I saw the stumbling-block. "I think I have found out the cause of your trouble," I said. "What is it?" she eagerly inquired. "You seem to me," I said, "like one in a dark place; you have lost your way, and cannot get out. You hear a voice. You recognize the voice as the voice of a friend. He says, Take my hand, and I will lead you into the light. You reply, Show me the light, and then I will take your hand. To this he says firmly, No; you must first take my hand, after that I will lead you into the light. If you do not take my hand, if you do not trust me in the dark, you shall never see the light." "Now," I added, "you see where you are. You are willing to trust Jesus provided He gives you first a sensible light. You want to feel the sweetness, grace, and truth of His Word before you believe it. In short, you think

you cannot believe, you do not believe, unless you feel faith. Will you now trust Christ in the dark ; that is to say, will you simply grasp His hand as stretched out to you in His gracious invitation, 'Come unto Me, and I will give you rest,' and suffer Him to lead you into the light, into the happy consciousness of rest and peace ?" The inquirer felt convinced that the difficulty in her path had at length been discovered. Her mind was relieved. She thought she grasped the hand in the dark then and there ; and we knelt down and gave joyful thanks unto the Lord.

Of the class whose difficulties are of a practical kind, I will give one or two instances out of a heap of them now before me. A young man, who seemed to see both his need of salvation and the way of life in Christ, said he was prepared to take his stand as a believer but for one thing. In his occupation he was associated with ungodly men and scoffers. He was sure he would not be able to withstand the shock of their rude assaults. He had seen others who, professing to have faith in the Saviour, give way and bring discredit on the cause of Christ. He would wait till he was strong enough to run the gauntlet, and then he would come right out as a Christian. After some conversation, I said to him, "Let us suppose your master wants you to go up to London on important business, in connection with which he holds forth the promise of large pay and promotion in his service. 'Here is money to pay your expenses so far. Meet me at such a place to-morrow. I will see you day by day, and will attend to all your needs. You can depend on me.' 'I will not stir one step,' you reply, 'until you put into my hand all the expenses of the entire journey. Moreover, I wish to manage your part of the business as well as my own.' What would you expect your master say to that ?" "That would never do," he replied ; "no master would bear with such a servant." "That is precisely the spirit you are now displaying towards the Lord Jesus," I made answer. "You refuse to follow Him on the footing of His pro-

mise to supply you with grace and strength from day to day, and from one service to another. You won't stir a step in the way to heaven until Christ bestow upon you as much grace as will carry you through. You want the whole stock in your own hand. He gives no stock of grace to any one."

In this case the practical difficulty was solved by a right understanding of the truth. Frequently, however, the difficulty vanishes when the inquirer takes a stand for the Lord in the Lord's name.

"Well, J——, did you take your stand for Christ yesterday?"

"I did," replied J——.

"And what did the men say?"

"Oh, they made a great laugh of me!"

"How did you feel? Did you give in?"

"No, no; I never felt so happy. I thought, 'Let him laugh that wins.'"

"Was that all that happened?"

"The foreman swore terribly at me, and said before them all, he would knock it out of me."

"And did he knock it out of you?"

"No; he only knocked it *into* me. The more he swore and raged, the more I prayed."

"Well, what do you think now?"

"I just think I never understood believing on Christ until I took my stand for Him yesterday."

One morning last year an intelligent lady came to my house in great distress of soul. She said she could not sleep; she could not bear the anguish and the misery of her sins any longer. In the course of our conversation I discovered her three principal difficulties. First, she could not offer one word of prayer; and "how then," said she, "can I be saved?" "Perhaps," I replied, "your heart prays; and God hears a groan or a sigh as readily as the utterance of the lips. But observe, this is not a question of *praying*, but is a question of

believing. It is not written, 'Pray, and thou shalt be saved;' but the word of the Lord is, 'Believe, and thou shalt be saved.'" After looking into a few passages of Scripture, this difficulty vanished. The second obstacle in her path was this—she felt certain that if she trusted in Christ *now*, she could not hold on many days; her heart was so deceitful, she was sure she would soon go back to the world. I pointed out her error, showing her that she was looking to Jesus *for only part of her salvation, and not for the whole.* Taking the Word of God, it was not difficult to show that when Jesus gives life it is *eternal life*, that His covenant is an *everlasting* covenant, that His people are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, and that His salvation is for time and eternity. Does He not say to every one who trusts in Him, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"? Does He not say of His sheep, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand"? This second obstacle was surmounted; but the inquirer had another difficulty still, and it seemed to her the worst of all the three. *She felt a dreadful load on her heart, and how could she ever come to Christ?* On this too the light of the Word was thrown. She must come to Jesus with her *loaded heart.* He says He will receive those who come with their loaded hearts. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." She now began to see that she had been striving to remove, or at least to lessen, the load before coming to the great Burden-bearer; and as I spoke to her of the Son of God, the glory of His person, the efficacy of His blood, the riches of His grace, and the freeness of His self-moving love, her countenance suddenly brightened, and, clasping her hands, she exclaimed, "I will take Him! I will take Him!" She then poured out her heart in thanksgiving and praise, and with a face beaming with joy she went away home to tell her husband and her mother what the Lord had done for her soul.

UNBELIEF.

Last year I made the acquaintance of an inquirer, a man of good education and large knowledge of the Scriptures, with whom I had several interviews. The result was invariably unsatisfactory. In our conversations, we reached the cross by various routes, the conclusion always being, "Here in the crucified and risen Son of God is an all-sufficient Saviour for an utterly lost sinner." The inquirer could see it, and he could not see it. Baffled, I gave up reasoning out of the Scriptures, and took another way. After a long and somewhat painful silence, which seemed to be the close of the conversation, I said:

"Mr. M——, are you immoral?"

"No, sir, I am not," he replied with amazement.

"Are you not a drunkard?"

"No, I assure you I am not," was the answer.

"You do not frequent the haunts of vice, or keep bad company, nor swear profanely?"

"Nothing of the sort, sir," he said with evident annoyance and some pride.

"Well then," said I, "had you told me that you were in the habit of all those gross and abominable sins I could scarcely have thought worse of you than I do this night. Since you entered this room you have committed again and again one of the meanest, most debasing, inexcusable, and damnable of sins. You have again and again charged the great God with falsehood. You admit this to be His Word, and yet in point of fact you say it is unreliable, untrue, and that He is a liar. If I were this moment summoned to give my testimony, then on my soul and conscience I should have to declare that you have in my presence several times made the Holy One of Israel a liar. And now before we part I feel bound, in the name of God, to charge you with that shocking offence."

Feeling deeply the truth and meaning of what I was saying, these words were spoken in a loud and solemn voice. Had the earth yawned beneath his feet, the young man could scarcely have looked more astonished. He seemed confounded and smitten. After a pause, I asked :

"What do you say?"

"It is too true, sir," he answered with some tenderness.

"Well, then, are you prepared to go on deliberately and persistently in this fiend-like iniquity, calling God a liar, saying that when He offers you mercy in His crucified Son He but mocks and plays a Satanic part towards you? Oh, my friend, this is sad, very sad, and might cause a heart of stone to weep."

"Oh, no, no!" was the answer. "I dare not, I cannot go on in this way."

The upshot was, that from that moment the inquirer ceased, as he trusts and professes, to be an unbeliever. I have seen him often since that time, and he appears to be another, a new man. From this it may be seen that it is sometimes necessary and salutary to give the unbelieving inquirer a sudden shock.

AN AGED INQUIRER.

Sometimes, instead of wounding the inquirer more deeply, the whole treatment should be in the way of healing. The wound is already very deep, unbelief is keeping it open, and the soul is bleeding away. One night at the close of a meeting last year, in one of the churches here, my attention was called to an aged woman who was sitting in a pew, weeping bitterly. She had remained to the after-meeting, and had been spoken to by some of the workers. Upwards of seventy years old, she knew she had but a short time to live. She knew she was a great sinner, her life had been misspent, God had forsaken her, and she did not wonder that He had utterly left her. What could she do? It was no use in a miserable old sinner like her trying. She

had tried hard, and it was no use. Such in substance was her story. I endeavoured to put the truth concerning Jesus before her, and spoke as kindly and tenderly as I could. But it was in vain. She appeared to become more miserable and distracted. The hour was late, and her husband, a very old man, growing impatient, urged her to retire. She would not. He rose and crept away towards the door. Again I spoke, and quoted passages of Scripture and prayed; but to no purpose. It was touching to witness the heaving sorrow and tears of the aged struggler. At length I advised her to retire.

"The hour is late," I said, "we must all be going. There is just one thing, I think, that you need, and it would do you good."

"What is that?" she eagerly inquired.

"It seems to me that what you need is to give Jesus a *little credit*, and leave yourself with Him. If you did but leave yourself with Him, you should see what He will do for you."

"A little credit!" she said, repeating the words as if fresh light was coming in upon her. "Give Jesus a *little credit*! Dear me!" Suddenly she seemed to come to herself, and gathering up her books she rose, and with the light of joy on her old wrinkled face, from which the tears were quickly wiped, she exclaimed:

"Deed, sir, I think I'll jist leave mysel' wi' Him." So she went her way, leaning, I cannot doubt, on the arm of the Saviour. At any rate, the last time I met her, she was not thinking that the Lord had forsaken her, but was cheerfully leaving herself with Him, and hoping in His Word.

The term "faith" has come to be associated in the minds of many with much that is theologically profound and experimentally perplexing. It is desirable, therefore, and even necessary sometimes, to substitute another word for it, provided always, of course, that we put in the forefront and keep in full view the one glorious object of faith, Jesus Christ the Saviour.

TAKING CHRIST ON PROBATION.

An instance of quite a common character, but by no means easy to deal with, may be given next. An inquirer, a young man, complained of the hardness of his heart, affirming that the gospel made no impression on him. Neither the threatenings of the law nor the promises of grace did him any good. He had tried again and again to believe on Christ, but the believing in his case came to nothing; it made no difference in him in any way.

"But do you really receive as true what God says in His Word?"

"I have not the least doubt that the Bible is all true. I see well enough, for one thing, that what it says about my heart is only too true."

"Do you really believe that Jesus is able and willing to save you?"

"I think I do; but it makes no difference."

"Well, then, let us suppose that, knowing your need of the Saviour, being in yourself wholly, helplessly lost, you simply accept Jesus as your Saviour, and proceed on that footing."

"But what if after a time I am no better, but feel my heart as hard as ever?"

"Let us suppose you go on upon the same footing; namely, that Christ will do what He has promised—save those who trust in Him."

"Well, but if I should die all the same, without any feeling of change in my heart?"

"I do not see that matters much."

"Dear me! That surely would be dreadful! I do not see it."

"No; you cannot *see* it, and never will until you believe it."

"How do you make it out?"

"Why, I read, 'These all died *in faith*.' I do not read, 'These all died *in feeling*.'"

It was clear the inquirer's idol was being rudely shaken, if not shattered. After a pause, I said—

"I think I could show you whereabouts you are just now, if you could bear it."

"Bear it! I believe I could bear almost anything, if it would do me good."

"Very well. Hitherto you have been taking Christ on probation, much as a master sometimes takes a servant of doubtful character on trial. If the master's suspicions and fears are realized, the servant must go; but if he comes up to the mark, he will be retained. You have been taking Christ on trial, putting Him to the test, now and again dismissing Him for failure. If He came up to your idea you would then believe on Him, and trust your soul in His hands. You would *try* Christ, and then, it may be, believe on Him. In this trying of yours there is more doubt, suspicion, unbelief, and pride, than you are aware of. His way is, Believe and try. Yours is, Try and believe. You will never be saved in that way. Now, friend, whether are you going, to take Christ *on probation*, or *in faith*? I demand an answer."

"Christ on trial?" repeated the inquirer slowly. "Christ on trial? I never thought of that before."

"Just think of yourself as treated in a similar manner. One requests a favour from you. You are delighted to give him not only what he wants, but a thousand times more. Instead of immediately accepting the favour asked, and generously proffered, he goes about trying to find out, by mean, tricky tests, whether you are not lying abominably. Would you like treatment of that kind?"

"Certainly not."

"What then do you think of your so treating the Son of God, who died for sinners. Is it right or is it wrong?"

"Wrong, very wrong."

"Are you to go on in this way any longer? Yea or nay?"

What! Is not the Lord Jesus sufficiently tested already? What means that cross, that whole life, that death? Read it in the light of His Word and love, and say, Has He not been tried enough?"

That young man is able to give a reason for thinking he began on a new footing that night, the footing not of taking Christ on probation, but in simple, unconditioned faith. He says he was all the time resisting the Holy Spirit, and trusts that now through the Spirit he has been enabled to lay hold on the arm of Him who is mighty to save.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.

A lady who had come a considerable distance was in visible distress of mind. She seemed almost incapable of sitting in one posture for two minutes at a time. Her whole frame quivered with emotion, and her countenance bore the marks of deep and long-continued sorrow. Her story was soon told. She had sinned, she believed, the unpardonable sin. We conversed for nearly an hour on the gospel. Theological hair-splitting is of all things, in a case like this, for the most part utterly useless, or worse. It is unprofitable to discuss the one hundred and one opinions held on this mysterious point. The Holy Spirit has been pleased to leave the matter unexplained and inexplicable; furnishing, however, light enough in the Word to warn the stout-hearted, to stimulate the anxious, and to prevent despair through sheer mistake. It is best to state the truth on broad grounds, and in the words of the Holy Ghost. It is always safe to say to the despairing, "If you but come to Christ, you have His word that He will not cast you out." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Relief is sometimes conveyed by showing what is not unpardonable sin. In cases of this kind much fervent prayer is better than discussion. In so deep a darkness, to lead such an one on, you need to go before in strong faith; for, while it is easy enough to argue, it is ex-

tremely difficult to lay hold on the arm of God on behalf of the despairing soul.

The truth was presented in various lights. But every appeal to the Word, every argument, and finally prayer, were wholly in vain. The trembling inquirer was about to retire in all the misery of utter hopelessness. Feeling my helplessness, and touched with pity at the spectacle of a soul on whom was settling down the gloom of despair, I inwardly prayed for direction, and then said :

"One thing more before you go. It is this, I see your Bible differs in one text from mine."

"What text is that?" she asked with a startled air.

"In my Bible I read, 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from *all* sin.' In your version it reads, 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from *some* sin.'" Strange as it may seem, this simple way of putting it produced an effect which all the previous arguments and Scripture quotations had failed to accomplish. Again and again she repeated the words, emphasising the '*all*,' at the same time declaring that, although she knew that Scripture well, it had never struck her so before. It seemed like a single ray of light shot through deepest night; only a gleam, but in such a gloom the faintest streak gives promise of approaching day. It seemed to be the beginning of a well-grounded confidence. She went away still fearing, but with a faint glimmer of hope. A week afterwards she returned to tell that the light was clearer, and her hope more definite and firm; in short, that her soul was becoming more calm and settled in the faith that Christ Jesus was able to save even her.

ELECTION.

A young man, a native of the Highlands, and a clerk in the town in which I live, was in much trouble about predestination. After a lengthened and unsatisfactory conversation, in which the open door of saving grace in the Lord Jesus was

again and again set before him according to the Scriptures, I said :

"Let us suppose that an angel carries you away to heaven, and shows you your name in the Book of Life, would that satisfy you? would you then believe on the Saviour?"

"Yes, I would," he answered, with the promptitude of a man who is clutching at something he eagerly covets.

"That is to say, you cannot or will not believe the word of Jesus when He says, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out;' but you would now believe His word not because He has spoken it, but because an angel has shown you another word that proves Christ's words to be true. If I invited you to dinner, and you accepted the invitation only after you had secretly discovered by means of a servant that there was a place at the table for you, what should I think? Would that be trusting my word, or the servant's word?"

"The servant's word, of course," he replied hesitatingly.

"In short then you would trust in Christ, not because you believe in His own word, but because you can believe another that His word is not a lie. Jesus says, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.' To this invitation you make reply, 'I am certainly a heavy-laden sinner; but if I am to believe you, you must get me an angel's certificate that you really mean what you say, or produce your book of decrees and secret destinies, and I will see if your gospel words are true. I demand certification: prove that you are not a liar, and prove it in my way, and to my satisfaction.' My friend, this is serious work. What do you think of your estimate and treatment of the Son of God?"

To this question there was no answer. The inquirer had leaned his head on his hand, and I could see the tears trickling through his fingers. After a pause of some minutes, he said :

"I never saw myself in that light before."

"What do you say now to the invitation of Christ in the gospel?"

"Sir," he replied, "I feel I am in His hands as I never felt before." So saying, he went away, and is now prosecuting, as he trusts, his journey heavenward, giving diligence to make his calling and election sure.

SEEKING THE DOOR IN A FOUNDATION-STONE.

Another case of difficulty about the doctrine of election comes to mind. In the discussion of this high subject I spent a whole night last year with a man who professed to be an inquirer. I was vexed at the result; it was unsatisfactory, and in one point of view unprofitable. The inquirer went away as he came, groping for the way like the blind. At our next interview I began by saying:

"Time is precious. Let us keep to one point. What do you want to speak about? Is it the doctrine of God's decrees, or is it the plan of salvation, that is to say, God's way of reconciling sinners—which is it? Shall we examine the great foundation-stone of predestination? or shall we inquire about the door?"

The inquirer declared he was truly desirous of *finding the door*. In the course of half an hour's conversation he several times bolted away from the question, and reverted to the decrees of God.

"My friend," I said, "it seems to me that your great business is to find the door of salvation. If once within, you would not only have opportunity of examining the foundations fully, but you would have the comfort of knowing how safe you were within walls so deep and high. Meanwhile, you are in danger of losing your life in examining the mysteries of the foundation. You may stumble over election into perdition. There is the door; escape for your life. You say you know you are lost, and that you seek salvation. The Son of God, the Saviour, stands before you in the gospel, holding forth eternal life, His Spirit, Himself, all you need, for your acceptance. I refuse to say one word more until you tell me what you are to say to the

offer and invitation of Jesus. I demand an answer; yea or nay?" This seemed to have the desired effect. At all events, the inquirer acknowledged that he felt *shut up* to Christ as he never had been; and his subsequent course has not belied his professed surrender to the Saviour that night.

CHRIST NOT REALIZED AS A PERSON.

A minister's wife, a middle-aged lady of refined manners and superior intelligence, was in distress because she "could not realize Christ as a person." This trouble of soul was evidently very deep, and of no recent date. In the course of conversation she poured forth many tears. At length the source of her difficulty seemed to come to light, and she was enabled to take hold of the end of a gospel thread.

"If you were in the dark," it was said to her, "and heard the sound of a human voice, would you have any difficulty or doubt in regard to identifying the voice with a person?"

"None whatever," was the reply.

"Then you surely have not been listening to the voice of Jesus in the Word, else you should realize the person by the voice. The Spirit reveals Christ by the Word. Hear now some of His sayings."

The words of Jesus were quoted and applied.

The inquirer saw the cause of her trouble at once, and frankly owned it. Like the disciples, after the ascension of Jesus, she had been gazing up into the vacant heavens, and could see nought but clouds, instead of listening to the Word that was nigh her, in her very mouth, the word of salvation, the bond by which the Holy Ghost binds the Saviour and the seeking soul in one. The burden was rolled away. This lady expressed an intense desire to begin and work for One who was no longer a mere idea, an historical name, a vague, impalpable abstraction, but a living, personal Lord, whose voice was now falling in clear, warm accents on her ear. "I feel I should like to go and do

some work for Jesus," she said; "but my husband is completely disabled, and in minding him I have no opportunity for working left me."

"But the noblest Christian work is to minister to your dear husband: go and do that for your Saviour." With this view she expressed her entire satisfaction, and went away rejoicing.

THE INQUIRER WHO HAD NO CONVICTION OF SIN.

A young man came into the vestry one night looking very unhappy. He said he was seeking salvation, and could not find it.

"How is it you cannot find it?" I asked.

"I think it is because I am not convinced of sin," he replied.

"What! are you not troubled about your sin?"

"No," he answered, "I am not."

"Why then are you here?" said I.

For reply he only shook his head.

"Perhaps," I suggested, "you are troubled because you are not troubled about your sin?"

"That is just it," said he quickly.

"It may be, then," I said to try him, "you have not sinned much?"

"Ah!" he exclaimed, as if startled. This last word seemed to furnish him with a text. His face brightened with excitement, and his eye gleamed as he began to pour forth a torrent of self-accusation. He declared he was not an ordinary sinner. He was wicked in the very core of him. He believed he had been born in sin. His progenitors were exceedingly depraved, and he knew he had inherited their depravity. If God punished sin to the third and fourth generation, then woe to him! He would not blame God for that; he was himself steeped in sin. He had rejoiced in evil. He was always sinning, and he knew it. He had striven to give it up; but day after day he returned to it, like the dog to his vomit. He was indignant at himself;

he had no excuse ; he would justify God in any case. In this strain he went on, till at length every inch of his body visibly quivered ; and on his heaving chest he pressed his hand again and again, as if the fire within was about to burst through. At last his tongue faltered, his utterance became choked, and bursting into tears, he continued for some time with his face buried in his hands, weeping bitterly. To see a young man of great physical strength and the most robust health so completely overcome was a touching spectacle.

On further conversation with him I could perceive that he possessed thorough self-knowledge, clear views of the spirituality and breadth of the divine law, tenderness of conscience, a wholesome detestation of his meanness as a sinner, and an intense desire to escape from evil into the pure atmosphere of the kingdom of God. And for all that he thought he had no conviction of sin. The explanation is easy enough. Such an one measures his sense of sin, and practical endeavours to be free from it, with his knowledge of God and His law. The latter is like the sun in its glory, while the former seems to him only as the eye of the burrowing mole. Conviction is the shadow of the sinner whose face is towards the light. Others may see the shadow ; himself sees it not.

There is conviction and conviction. In one class of the convinced, the inquirer is like the child who, having lost his way, is seated on a door-step crying. A passer-by speaks a kind word, and for a moment he is quieted ; but he breaks out again. Another gives him a cake, and he is comforted for a little ; but the sorrow bursts forth afresh. Nothing will satisfy him but home and his mother's arms. There is another class of the convinced, whose sense of divine things is so slight that, like the beggar who is contented to go homeless all his days, provided only he gets a bit of bread from door to door, they are pleased with every morsel of comfort, come from whatever quarter it may, and never find their way to the Father's house.

That young man found, as he thinks, rest in Jesus after a few days. It is now nearly a year and a half ago, and he appears to be holding on his way stedfastly and cheerfully.

"NOT CONVINCED ENOUGH."

After some conversation with an inquirer, a point was reached when he said, "I am sure, sir, I am not convinced enough."

"How much conviction would satisfy you?" I asked.

He was not able or not disposed to answer that question, and I went on to say :

"Do you know J. T. ?"—an old Christian in the neighbourhood, an eminently holy man.

"I know him well," was the reply.

"Do you think that if you had as much conviction of sin as that godly man has, you would be satisfied, and quite prepared to start as a Christian?"

"I would," was the ready answer.

"That is to say, you would like to possess the knowledge and experience of a saint, who has been nearly forty years in the way, without your having the trouble of taking so much as one step? You wish to accomplish a forty years' journey without ever beginning! Plainly that will not do."

He admitted the force of this.

"Let us suppose, however," I said, "that it is possible for you at this moment, without believing in Christ, to have all the knowledge and conviction of that aged believer, would you be satisfied?"

My inquirer was obviously at a loss, and made no reply.

"Let us suppose that you would be satisfied. What then? Why, in that case, you would be nothing but a blinded, puffed-up, self-righteous Pharisee. It would be tantamount to saying that you were perfect. It would be building on the foundation not of Christ, but of self. But would you indeed be satisfied? Look at that same godly man. He complains more of sin than

you do. The less sin the more holiness; and the more holiness the more sorrow for the sin that remains. He will tell you that he ought to be and longs to be much more thoroughly convinced of the evil of sin than he is. He will tell you that the reason why he ever sins is because he is not *perfectly* convinced of sin. You say you would not fear to trust in Christ if you thought you were convinced enough of sin. Well, let us try and measure your conviction. Your knowledge of your need of Christ is the true measure of your sense of sin. So much sense of your need of Christ, so much conviction. That is the length and breadth of it: the one is equal to the other. Now, are you so convinced of sin as to see your utter need of Christ as the only Saviour of sin? Are you so convinced of sin as to be willing to turn from your sin to God?"

"I see all that," was the answer, "but——"

"But what? Go on."

"Well, I feel as much plagued and puzzled as ever."

At this point it seemed advisable to change our tack. After a long and solemn pause I began, as if rather talking to myself, to speak of the wonderful love of God to sinners in the gift of His Son, and was enlarging on the glory of the person of Jesus, the efficacy of His blood, the riches of His grace, the greatness of His power to save, and the depth and tenderness of His sympathy with sinners, when the inquirer all of a sudden broke in with the exclamation:

"That will do, sir!"

"What will do?"

"Christ will do. Oh yes, sir; I see it now! Christ will do."

"Are you satisfied then?"

"Yes," he replied in joyful accents; "I am satisfied with Him."

"Then," I said, "that will do."

That young man has since passed through a severe ordeal of affliction, in which he has played the man, having been wonderfully sustained by faith in God. He still says "Christ will do."

SALVATION BY READING THE BIBLE.

Many and subtle are the delusions of a self-righteous spirit. One night, in the inquiry-meeting in the town of Dundee, Mr. Moody, turning to a minister who assisted, said :

"Now, you can have the last word."

"I really have nothing more to say," was the reply.

"Just tell your own conversion," said Moody promptly, almost indeed peremptorily.

The minister in a few words told his story, and amongst other things stated that he had long sought salvation by reading the Bible through and through. At length he found he had been putting Bible-reading in the room of Christ and of faith in Him. Next day a lady intimated by a letter that this had been her very case, and that the simple statement of the minister, in regard to his attempt to save his soul by Bible-reading, had been the means of bringing to light her snare, and of saving her from it. The snare was broken, and she had escaped.

A COMMON CASE.

J. S. said she believed everything, but felt nothing.

"Let us look into this. Shall we appeal to God's Word?"

"Yes, certainly," she made answer.

"But which version of it? The old English Bible, or the other version here, which I am bound to say is full of errors and lies?"

J. S. looked puzzled.

"Be so good as to say which of the versions?"

"The old Bible, of course."

"Oh, very well! so you have changed your mind, and given up that lying edition of it, have you?"

"I never used it, sir," said the inquirer, with a face of crimson.

"Nay, but you have used it. According to your own statement, you seem to have used nothing else, as I will show you.

Look here, in this good old book, I read, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Now, in that lying Bible printed in your wicked, unbelieving heart, the passage runs thus, 'Except a man be born again, and *feel it*, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Again, in the old Bible we read, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;' whereas, in *your* version it reads, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *feel* that you believe, and you shall be saved.' So, instead of 'Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out,' we find in your book, 'Him that cometh *feelingly* to Me, I will in no wise cast out.' And for this glorious passage, 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin,' your version gives, 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us, *who feel its cleansing*, from all sin.' So also, 'Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely' becomes, according to you, 'Whosoever will, *and feeling that he wills*, let him take the water of life freely."

"Now, here is what the matter comes to. You have been all the time substituting your imagination for the Word of God. You have been adding to the Scriptures. You have been altering the terms of salvation. My friend, you might almost as well fall to cursing and swearing, and yet tell me you are all the while seeking salvation. Will you simply receive the Word of God, and hold by that alone? Is it to be His way, or yours?"

J. S. thinks she has come into light from God, and that this light is guiding her along the path of peaceful, loving discipleship. She clings to the old Bible, and says she has a positive horror of that hateful, lying version of it that kept her so long away from Christ.

THE FOURTH CROSS.

W. had read his Bible for years, had become a communicant, had even gone into Christian work, and he was none better, but rather worse. He could not understand it.

"What you want, W., is redemption. How are you to get it?"

"Exactly so; that is what I have been striving after," said the inquirer.

After some conversation on the atoning sacrifice of Christ, I said, "Let us in imagination go to Calvary. See yonder the awful scene, the three crosses, the three sufferers, a thief on either side, and the Son of God in the midst. But what is this? Lo, a man is busy erecting another cross. He digs a pit, he rears the beams of wood, he sweats, he toils, all unheeding the stupendous transaction going on beside him. Let us ask what he means.

"'Why,' he says, 'I want to be saved, and I am preparing a cross for myself.'

"'But see, who is that yonder? Is He not the Saviour? Look to Him.'

"'Tush! I know all that,' he replies. 'But He is only doing His part. I must also do mine if I am to be redeemed.'

"'Hark! what voice is that? Man, don't you hear Him? He cries, "It is finished!" The atoning sacrifice is complete; redemption is finished. See, He dies! Is it not enough?'

"'Nonsense,' says he. 'It is not finished. Wait till I erect my cross, and do and suffer my part; then redemption will be finished, but not till then.'

"Now, W., what do you think of that man's sayings and doings at Calvary?"

"Why," said the inquirer, "it is nothing less than blasphemy."

"Well, my friend, you are the fourth cross man. You have been reading, and praying, and working, and all that you may add to the finished work of Christ. You might as well think of adding to the magnitude and glory of the sun. If you were to offer to God to make the heavens and the earth more beautiful and perfect than they are, it would not be more profane than what you are doing. You are denying the testimony of the

Father to the finished work of redemption, in raising His Son from the dead, and exalting Him to His own right hand. You are denying the testimony of the Holy Ghost in the Word to the same work. You are giving the lie to the Son of God on the cross. In effect, you are playing the part of a *rival Christ*.

"Now, let us take any one of the many passages in Scripture that set forth the truth about redemption. Here is one, 'In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.' Let us bend our knees in prayer, and you can say, 'I desire to have redemption through His blood *and my good works*.' Shall I put that in for you, or leave it out?"

"Oh, leave it out, leave it out!"

A considerable period has elapsed, and I have met W. many a time since, frequently in the street and elsewhere; but in the most hurried moment, he is sure to say, with a smile, "I am leaving you out. It is just 'redemption through His blood;' that's enough. I see it more and more."

THE DYING INQUIRER.

Many are the ways in which burdened souls are relieved through grace. Some by simply pondering the Word, some by an illustration of the truth, some in conversation, some in prayer, and some by means of a gospel song. An instance of the last may be adduced here.

At the close of a meeting in Dundee one night in the last week of August, 1861, a Christian young man came up and requested me to visit a dying girl. The hour was late, I was weary, the distance from home was considerable, and I felt unwilling to increase it, especially because a long journey to be taken on the following day would render it necessary for me to be astir at earliest dawn. Having explained how matters stood, I added, "Excuse me for the present. I expect to return home in five weeks, and I will visit the young woman then."

"I think, sir, she will not live as long as that," rejoined the young man sorrowfully.

"Has no one been to see her?" I inquired.

"Yes," was the reply. "I have gone several times, and have also taken others with me, but her mind is as dark as ever."

"But what can I do? I can only speak to her of the Saviour as you have done."

"Ah, sir," said my friend in a pleading tone, "we must try all means. Ever since I found her out I have felt greatly burdened about her salvation, and it is so hard to see the poor thing go down to a Christless grave. Will you not try and come?"

Unable to withstand this appeal, I said, "Well then, let us go." We reached the Overgate, a street in the centre of the town, when the public-houses were closing. Scores of wretched creatures, who an hour or two before had entered those chambers of death with some traces of humanity about them, were now reeling out into the night incapable of reason in word or deed—far more like the handiwork of the devil than the creatures of God. Passing hastily through the wild, yelling crowd, we plunged into a narrow, dirty, dingy close. Here we encountered a company of drunkards, hauling one another backwards and forwards by way of mutual help. We were jostled into the dirtiest side of the passage, which was no better than a wide gutter, but fortunately escaped more serious collision with the miserable revellers. Up a dark stone stair, then up a wooden stair, which seemed ready to sink beneath one every step, and up a third stair, more rickety still, we groped our way; and although not unaccustomed to the sickening vapours and horrid smells of such places, exhausted nature held out with some difficulty. We reached the sick chamber—*sick chamber* indeed! The very room, from age, dirt, misery and all meanness, seemed itself to be sick.

I saw at a glance that the young woman was dying. We

spoke to her of Jesus. She listened closely, but said she had heard all that again and again. She knew she was a sinner, and unforgiven. She felt certain that if she died in her present state she would perish. After some conversation, reading, and prayer, we gave up in despair, and were about to leave. My hand was on the door, when the moaning voice of the dying girl fell upon my ear. "A dark, dark eternity!" she sobbed out. Turning round, and seeing that imploring look of anguish, and hearing the hasty, half-choked breathing—the beginning of the horrid death-rattle, which, though familiar to one's ear, always inspires a shudder—I found it impossible to take another step. "O God!" I said in my heart, "what wilt Thou have me to do?" Suddenly, and for the first time in my life, it struck me that I might sing a hymn.

"Shall I sing a hymn?" I asked.

"Oh yes, you may!" replied the girl, seemingly much pleased that we were to stay a little longer. We sang the well-known hymn; "Rock of Ages," and had reached the third stanza—

"Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling,"

when suddenly the girl started from her pillow, and sat up in the bed with folded hands. Physical strength seemed to have returned to the wasted form; her countenance began to beam; and to our astonishment she exclaimed, "Oh, sir, He has come!" Stopping short in the singing, I said, "Who has come?" "Jesus!" was the joyful reply. Had the sun shone out at that hour, my companion and I could scarcely have been more amazed at the sudden change. The burden under which she had groaned for months was, as she told us, entirely gone. She saw Jesus, she said, in a new light; and she could trust Him as the bearer of sin and the Saviour of the lost. The way of salvation was now so plain to her that she was able freely to discourse to us of what she believed and felt; and much did

she wonder at her blindness and hardness of heart in holding out against the Saviour so long. We joined together in singing a new song, the dying girl being apparently raised for the time above all weakness and pain. We parted; and as we went homeward, I enjoined on my companion the duty of wisely and tenderly watching the case, counselling him to warn her against mere emotional excitement, and to deal faithfully with her in view of the judgment-seat.

She lived several weeks, and throughout that period gave evidence as full and satisfactory as the circumstances would admit that she had passed from death unto life. Patient in the midst of extreme suffering, meekly resigned to the will of God, abounding in thanksgiving, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, she spent her last days in speaking of Jesus to all who entered her room. It was only when her voice was hushed in death that her testimony to the Redeemer was closed, a testimony all the more noble and striking that it was given forth in the face of ungodliness and sin in some of the most hideous forms.

On considering this whole case, I arrived at the conclusion that the hindrance to her receiving the Lord Jesus was the inveterate mental habit of introspection, looking within for ground of hope or boldness instead of looking to Jesus for justification. Reading, praying, and conversation, had all failed to overcome this powerful tendency. She was so fully possessed with a sense of her misery and sin that she could only look down into the pit into which she was sinking, not daring to look up to the Deliverer who was standing near. What other means had failed to accomplish, the Holy Ghost seemed pleased to effect by the singing. She forgot herself for the moment, she looked up, she saw Jesus and believed, and so escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowler. "Faith cometh by hearing." In this case faith came by hearing the truth sung. The wisdom of the Holy Ghost is seen in using means adapted to the various

temperaments, temptations, and difficulties of struggling souls. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?" It is ours to employ all lawful means, leaving the rest with Him who will not fail to administer and illustrate His own grace as seemeth good to Himself.

UNDER A CLOUD.

Real Christians frequently appear in the character of inquirers. A young man came in one night, and stated his case. He had been converted some time before this, as he had thought. For a season he had held on his way in much comfort, and in conscious fellowship with God, as he had hoped. But he had got into utter darkness. His peace was clean gone. He did not know where he was. He knew he had much sin; but he had not gone astray, nor had he conformed to the world. He was watching, and praying, and striving to walk in the way of faith. He did not think he was looking to himself for help, or trusting in his own righteousness. He was endeavouring to look to Christ, and to Him alone. But there was no relief; he was beginning to despair. What could he do? We conversed for some time. Now and again I put a question to him with the view of eliciting an answer that would throw light upon the source of his trouble. At length I caught the end of a thread that helped to unravel the case. He was greatly afflicted, he said, by wandering thoughts in prayer; and what seemed to him still worse, he often fell asleep on his knees. This suggested a question concerning his health and work, and it came to light that he was suffering physically from being overworked.

"Stop," said I, "I think I know where you are. If I am not much mistaken, you are putting the saddle on the wrong horse. You are blaming your soul for the infirmity of your body. Plenty of unbelief no doubt there is in you and me; but what if after all you are setting down as the effect of unbelief what is mainly due to enfeebled health? Last summer, when on a visit to a

family in the north, I was invited to spend a few minutes with the children, who were amusing themselves in a large room set apart for their own use. All of a sudden the lights went down, and we were left nearly in total darkness. The unexpected eclipse was followed by the sound of half a dozen little voices exclaiming, 'Oh!' and bursting into laughter, not unmingled with expressions of regret. One little girl came running up, and taking my hand, said, 'Oh, sir, it is father who has turned the gas down! But he isn't angry; it isn't a punishment. He always does it when it is time to go to bed.' Now, perhaps this is your case. Your health is suffering from excessive toil. Nature rebels, protests, and complains. You cannot sleep when you would; you sleep when you would not. It is your heavenly Father putting down the lights, and in His wisdom and love thus telling you it is high time for you to cease those killing labours, and take rest. Had these little children imagined that their father was angry with them, instead of going to get the accustomed kiss, they would have sulked away to bed, thought hard thoughts of their father, dreamed unhappy dreams, and in the morning awoke with hearts ruffled and sore. You think that your heavenly Father hides His face from you. Perhaps He does: I cannot certainly tell. But it seems to me that you are expecting too much from the gospel." "How is that?" he demanded somewhat eagerly. "Well, we know the gospel is very glorious, and there is no end of its blessings; but it does not provide a man with new nerves, a new brain, or a new liver. That is provided for in another way. So long as your health continues in its present state, probably there is not a promise in the Bible, not a blessing in Christ, nothing in heaven that will afford you relief. Attend to your health, and keep looking to Jesus, and you shall see." After some more conversation my friend went away convinced that he had discovered one cause of his darkness. So indeed it proved to be; for he is now, as he says, in the enjoyment of health and peace.

GROWING DOWNWARDS.

There are marked epochs in the lives of some Christians. New light comes in upon them in a flood : perhaps a new truth, or clearer views of a truth already known. At each epoch, the believer is ready to doubt if he was converted before ; fuller light throwing past experience into the shade. The widening and deepening of the foundations of the kingdom of God in the soul, is sometimes *to our consciousness* a more remarkable event than regeneration was. It may occasion fresh inquiry, and no Christian is the worse for these spiritual upheavals when faith wisely follows on the heels of heart-searching.

One Sabbath night in 1860 I assisted a little band of earnest and gifted young men in an open-air service which they had conducted for several months with remarkable tokens of blessing. The address on that occasion turned mainly on the extreme deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the human heart. At the close of the meeting we retired, as was usual, to a room in a neighbouring house for the purpose of conversing with the inquirers, of whom there was a considerable number. To my astonishment and grief I found my young evangelists, some six or seven in all, sitting among the anxious, and looking very sad. One said, "I am wholly wrong." Another, "I don't think I have ever believed yet." A third, "I fear, sir, I am nothing but a hypocrite." A fourth, "I am all at sea about my own soul."

As I was talking to them, being at no small loss what to do, somebody rushed into the room, and said loud enough for all to hear, "Come out and help us ; Old — —, the infidel, is at the door saying terrible things to the people, and there are none to refute him." "Where is my hat?" said the young man who had just pronounced himself a hypocrite. "I'll go too," said another. Very shortly these young soldiers of the cross were on the scene of battle ; and the relief which

my counsels had failed to impart, was found in an earnest and hearty contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. Two of these young men are now in the ministry, and doing good service for their Lord, while the others occupy a quieter sphere in the same great vineyard.

"Whenever I become unhappy," said a venerable saint, distinguished for his Christian cheerfulness and activity, "I do not go to my closet to brood over my misery there. Taking a handful of tracts, I go round and speak of Jesus Christ to believers and unbelievers as I find opportunity, and I invariably return home quite happy without once trying to be happy." There was sound philosophy as well as Christian wisdom in that course.

*Very
true*



CHAPTER X.

CONVERSIONS.

THE great problem of the world in all ages has been this :
How shall man be healed of his sore sin-plague?

To this the answers of these latter days are loud and various.

"Let him alone," growls the Atheist.

"Worship him," suggests the Pantheist.

"Develop him," argues the Materialist.

"Polish him," advises the Broad-school man.

"Church him," shrieks the Ritualist.

The Bible solution is, Let the sinner be created anew by the Holy Ghost. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new."

What is conversion? It is, in brief, the turning of the sinner from sin to God. Its origin is the grace of God. Its author is the Holy Spirit. Its nature is a thorough renewal of the inner man, in the hearty renunciation of the devil, the world, and the flesh, and in a cordial embrace of Jesus with a free surrender of the whole man to Him. Its outward sign and fruit are a holy life.

The *suddenness* of conversions has been an offence to many.

Is there reason for offence? The Bible conversions are all sudden. In the nature of the case it must be so. There is a moment when a man is not a believer, and there is a moment when he is. In the last moment of his unbelief he is still an unconverted man. In the first moment of his believing he is a converted man. Between the last moment of unbelief and the first moment of faith, there is no interval. For if there was, then for that space of time the man is neither saint nor sinner, neither saved nor lost, neither converted nor unconverted, neither justified nor condemned, without responsibility to God, without relation to God. That is impossible. The passing from unbelief to faith must be instantaneous in the fact, but not necessarily instantaneous in our consciousness of the fact. There is a moment when the tide begins to flow, though no eye is piercing enough to mark its first rise. The greatest works of God begin in a moment. Light was instantaneous in its creation. So is life. The first throb of the pulse of Lazarus indicated the instantaneous quickening of the dead man. No eye marked the first pulsation. Lazarus himself was probably not conscious of it. But so it was. Such is conversion; thus quick, for it is the first throb of the heart beating loyal to its God.

The error of some who object to the suddenness arises from their viewing conversion either in the light of their own experience, or in the light of the outcome of conversion in the Christian life. The experience of the whole workings of the soul in connection with conversion may be, often is, a lengthened experience. Many of the converts, in the recent work of grace, said they had been the subjects of conviction, of the comings and goings of anxious thoughts, of the strivings of the Spirit from infancy up to manhood; and yet their conversion was in a proper sense sudden. These previous convictions may be regarded as the straining of a cable, which in conversion is suddenly snapped.

Some reckon their conversion as extending over the period betwixt the first awakening and the first conscious acting of faith, their first sense of peace with God, or it may be their arriving at assurance; whereas their conversion was really effected the moment they were united to Jesus by a vital faith, whatever experience went before or came after. The outcome of conversion may be slow, a full manifestation of it in Christian life may not appear so suddenly as to strike the eye of the beholder; but the change itself before God is sudden, and therefore it may be instantaneous or sudden in the consciousness of the converted soul, and so may result in a sudden and unexpected profession of faith before men. Was it not so with thousands on the day of Pentecost?

Some seem to confound repentance and conversion. Repentance is the sweet, wholesome stream that flows through the whole course of the Christian's life on earth. Conversion is the threshold of the sanctuary out of which those blessed waters flow. Let us not confound the fountain with the stream. Repentance, it has been said, is the tear in the eye of faith. So it may be said conversion is the soul turning her face to a reconciling God.

Moreover, those who object to a conversion on the ground of its suddenness, forget that it may seem good to God to crowd into a few hours of life an amount of experience that might have been spread over as many years. This is strictly in keeping with the laws of the human mind. This, in fact, is a common experience in human life. For instance, in the season of extreme danger, in the hour of terrible calamity, in the night of anguish and suffering, who has not felt that he has lived more in a few days or hours than perhaps in as many months or years? What an age of sensation, of feeling, of thought, of manifold trouble was condensed into the hours of the thief upon the cross! Be that as it may, we can defend sudden conversions by a simple appeal to the testimony of the Holy Spirit in His narrative of conversions in the Word.

Jr 13

Facts are divine doctrines. Incidents with a spiritual meaning are often gospels in the concrete. The Master who taught by parables is still teaching by instances. In a great spiritual awakening the veil is drawn aside and the inner workings of the Spirit are laid open. What is faith? What is repentance? What is salvation? These questions are answered by facts patent to every unprejudiced beholder.

The following instances of conversion are selected from among many, not from any peculiar interest attaching to them, but because the subjects are all, with one exception, personally known to the writer.

THE MINISTER'S CONVERSION.*

A minister of the gospel (not in Dundee), with whom I had been previously acquainted for many years, told me that he has just undergone that great change by which a man is brought by the Holy Ghost into the kingdom of God. He said he knew and preached the truth of the gospel in the letter of it, but its experimental and saving power he never knew till now. He felt he could not preach with power; and he saw plainly that no power attended his ministry. He became very unhappy; he secretly felt he was not converted. Hearing of the work in Dundee, he came here, and attended the meetings held by Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey. One night he was deeply solemnized. At the beginning of the meeting the thought arose in his heart, "What if the Lord were to convert me to-night!" In the course of his address Mr. Moody said, "I am not a Universalist; I believe what God says of eternal punishment. I believe in the old-fashioned hell. But," he added, addressing the unsaved, "you are yet out of hell." And then he went on to preach Christ, and to invite perishing sinners to the Saviour.

At this point the word went to the heart of the minister. He left the meeting with the arrows of the Almighty sticking in his

* This was communicated to "The Christian" in February, 1874.

heart, and went home to his own parish, crying to God not to let him enter the pulpit again until grace had made him a new man. As the time drew nigh for ministerial duty, he became more intensely wretched. At length, only a few hours before public worship on the Sabbath, light from on high dawned upon him, and he found himself for the first time at the foot of the cross. With this light in his soul, he went into the pulpit, and preached as he had never preached before. I have it on the authority of one who was present on that occasion, that the congregation appeared to be thunderstruck at the manner and spirit of their minister; and many were in tears. The Lord has given him the tongue of fire; his soul is glowing with a desire to preach Christ, not only to his own people, but also to the many careless persons and families of the surrounding country.

• The facts I have just stated have been communicated to me by my friend the minister himself. May God greatly bless and prosper him! Such an instance is surely fitted to show that the work now in progress is both deep and genuine. One of the most improbable of all things, as it seems to us, is the conversion of an unconverted minister or elder. But nothing is too hard for the Lord. All praise and glory to His free and sovereign grace!

THE STUDENT.

Said a mother in this town to her son, a student, "W——, when so many young men are seeking the Lord, are you not thinking at all about it?" "Mother," he answered earnestly, "I am thinking about salvation. I scarce can sleep for thinking about it; and I have solemnly resolved that I will never enter a pulpit unless I am born again." This was spoken with so much feeling that the mother's heart grew too full for speaking, and the conversation dropped. Next night I met the father, who grasped my hand, and said with a voice choked with emotion, "What think you? W—— has just gone into the inquiry-room! I am wondering if the hour of decision has

come." Grasping my hand again, he added, "Oh, pray!" and hastened homewards, doubtless for the purpose of wrestling with God for his son at this hour of crisis. About an hour afterwards the young man returned home. He did not need to speak. Every feature of his face was speaking. "I have found Christ," he said. Father, mother, and brother, also a believer, wept for joy. Gathering the family together, the father, scarcely able to speak, whilst all around were weeping in sympathy, gave thanks to God for his son, who "was dead, but is alive again; was lost, but is found." The student's own statement is as follows:

"An evangelistic meeting was announced to be held in the Barrack Park on the evening of the 12th June. The glorious blessings of salvation which the Holy Spirit had been pouring down in connection with the labours of Messrs. Moody and Sankey incited me to go that evening to hear them, not without hope that I too might get a blessing. Here I may state that I had heard the American laymen on two occasions before during their first visit to Dundee. The latter of these I can well remember. Mr. Moody spoke from Luke xiv. 15-24. I was deeply impressed with the solemnity and earnestness of the discourse, and more than ever before I felt I was neglecting a matter of eternal interest—my own salvation. I returned home that evening deeply impressed; but the impression speedily passed away, leaving no result behind. This, I repeat, was on the occasion of the first visit of the American evangelists to Dundee. But God in His blessed providence put it into their hearts to revisit our town. Thinking it might be the last opportunity of hearing these devoted laymen, and in the hope of receiving the blessing of that salvation in which I could see many around me rejoicing, I set out for the park.

"The second hymn of the service had been sung. Mr. Moody prayed, and announced for his subject 'The Parable of the Great Supper' (Luke xiv. 15-24); and as his voice rolled over

the vast multitude, my mind immediately reverted to the occasion when I heard him on the same topic in the Kinnaird Hall, and the impression I had then received suddenly revived in me. In applying the parable to the consciences of his audience, the preacher maintained that there was no unsaved soul before him but had some trivial excuse for making light of the gospel invitation. He recounted some of these excuses, which he said were nothing else than the devil's machinations to draw the soul away from the offer of salvation. The great danger which those incurred who continued to neglect the blessed invitation of the Saviour, and who were making no provision for an endless eternity, and an earnest appeal to those who were out of Christ to embrace the gospel offer now, formed the conclusion of his discourse. Never before was I so impressed.

"My conscience told me that I was neglecting the great salvation, that I was trampling under foot the glorious sacrifice of Him who had given His life a ransom for sinners, and that therefore I was under the wrath, and curse of God, and in danger of being called unprepared into His presence at any moment. Something whispered to me that I might never again have so favourable an opportunity of being saved, and that I ought now to accept the invitation so freely offered in the gospel. I went to a second meeting in Ward Chapel. The inquirers were invited to go into a room by themselves. I felt a desire to go, but hesitated. At length God by His grace, I believe, enabled me to overcome my feelings of pride and shame, and I left my seat and went into the inquiry-room. Here I was shown the way of life more clearly. I felt that my sin had made me a child of wrath, and that I was utterly unable of myself to remove it. It was then I saw that I was to look away from myself altogether to Jesus Christ, whose blood could wipe away my every stain, and *who could do all things for me*. So I was enabled to believe on Him, and on the efficacy of His sacrifice for me a wretched

sinner, knowing that He says, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.' I then and there took Him at His word, and trusted Him. Ever since I have felt the blessedness of peace with God; and through His grace I think I can truly say, Old things have passed away, and all things have become new. To Him be all the glory and the praise."

A year and a half has passed, and the student holds on his way bravely.

THE MERCHANT.

In a prayer-meeting in this town, Mr. F. G., a gentleman engaged in business, rose and made the following statement: "Some time ago I had occasion to be at Inverury, a town not far from Aberdeen. After transacting my business, I found that it was some hours before the south-going train was due, and resolved on occupying the interval by walking to the next station. As I went on enjoying the air and the landscape, I came upon a group of five persons, three young men and two young women, who were sitting on a grass knoll near the way-side, evidently engaged in absorbing and happy conversation, which I discovered on passing was of a religious character. One of the young men rose as I passed, and politely offered a tract for my acceptance. I took the tract, and glanced at the title of it, which ran somewhat like this—

TRAVELLER TO ETERNITY, HEAVEN OR HELL, . WHICH?

Seeing me read the title of the tract, which I think belonged to the Stirling series, the young man asked me if I could answer the question. I said frankly I could not. He expressed astonishment that I should be on the way to eternity, and not know whether I should spend it in heaven or in hell. 'But how,' I asked, 'could one know?' 'Do you know where you are now going?' said he. 'I do,' was my answer. 'I am going to the station

yonder.' 'Well,' he rejoined, 'if you turned right about and walked away back, would you know that you had wheeled round and were going in the opposite direction?' 'Doubtless I should,' was my reply. 'The Word of God,' said the young man, who kept walking by my side, 'tells you where as a sinner you are going. Surely if you have turned your back on destruction, and have set your face towards God and heaven, you might know it.' Here he took out the Bible, and began to prove his assertion by passages of Scripture. One text was this, 'He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life.' Drawing my attention to the word 'hath,' as signifying present time, he proceeded to say, 'If you are a believer, even now you are in possession of everlasting life; and if it be so, surely you ought to know it.'

"By this time another of the young men had joined us, and we went on all three together, discussing the plan of salvation, faith in Jesus Christ, and assurance of God's love, the work of the Holy Spirit, and, in short, the vital truths of the gospel. Portions of Scripture, with which they were obviously well acquainted, were turned up, read, explained, and applied with a power I had never felt before. They hemmed me in with the Word of God and the most solemn entreaties. Such a sermon I had never heard; here were two preachers and one hearer. Before we parted prayer was offered on my behalf, and I took my journey south with the deepest impressions of eternal things on my heart. I resolved that on reaching home I would give myself no rest until through the mercy of God the momentous question was settled. I now saw plainly enough that I was ignorant of saving grace, and that sure enough I was not on the way to heaven. My first thought was to betake myself to the diligent and careful study of the Word of God with prayer, thinking I should speedily find all I wanted. But in this I wholly failed. For, although I continued to search the Scriptures night and day, and with all the earnestness of a man who

feels that his eternal well-being is at stake, I could find no rest to my weary soul. I then thought that I might find in the services of the sanctuary what my private endeavours had failed to secure. I seized every opportunity of attending church, and gave attention to the preaching as I had never done before. But it was all in vain. I was no better, but worse. For about a year I persisted in these futile, weary labours, with no other result than increasing anxiety and sense of sin.

"When the American evangelists came here I attended all the meetings, and hesitated not to enter the inquiry room, although perhaps few so old as myself were there. At length one night my attention was directed to John iii. 16: 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that *who-soever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' 'Whosoever,' I could see, meant anybody. A new light seemed to shine on that word, and I said in my heart, If any one, why not me? That moment I was enabled to receive the Lord Jesus as my Saviour, and to surrender myself to Him. Truly it is a passing from death unto life. Through grace I now know the way, and can tell where I hope to spend eternity."

After his conversion this gentleman paid a visit to his sister, spoke to her of Jesus, and left a tract with her. The result was her conversion. She sought the salvation of her husband, but he stumbled at that great stumbling-stone and rock of offence, the atoning sacrifice of the cross. One day a Christian neighbour entered into conversation with him about the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God. Coming to a suspension-bridge, the Christian handed twopence to the toll-keeper, saying, "Is that enough for us both?" "It is," was the tollman's reply. "Do you think," said the believer to his companion, "that it is fair for the tollman to take the fare for us both from me?" "Perfectly fair," was the answer. "Do you think," said the other, "that it would be just in the tollman to demand the fare from you, because another has paid it for you?" "It would be

unjust to do so," was the reply, "for that would be the same as demanding payment twice." "Well now," rejoined his friend, "don't you see the meaning and value of the work of Jesus, the Divine Substitute, who died the Just for the unjust that He might bring us unto God? Lay hold on that Sin-bearer as He is set forth for your acceptance in the gospel, and you will never come into condemnation. Reject Him, and you perish." This simple illustration was the means, it would appear, of leading that unbeliever to the cross. He had not gone far on the other side of the bridge, when he saw the way of life in the death of the great Substitute, and embracing Jesus, could say, "Christ pays for me; I cross the river free. Justice will not meet me at the other side to demand from me what is no longer due, since the Substitute has so gloriously satisfied every claim—

"Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow."

This gentleman has since become an office-bearer in a church in this town, being highly esteemed by the Christian people.

THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.

"I can't well explain to you what forces me to tell you; but I must do it. The Rev. Mr. Bonar, at a meeting on Monday, 15th February, made reference to a young man who appeared to be a commercial traveller, and who he observed was strongly affected at a meeting held in the City Hall on the Sunday evening previous. From what he said, as reported in the newspapers, I believe I am the young man to whom he referred.

"On Saturday, the 13th February, I came into Glasgow from the country, and in the evening I had occasion with a friend to go down to one of the boat-sheds on the river to make inquiries about —. While I was standing talking to some persons in the shed, we heard a great splash in the water. We

ran forward to see what it was, and found that a man had fallen over the quay, and was struggling for dear life. Every effort was made to save him; but, alas! all failed. He had been only seven or eight minutes in the water, yet when we brought him up he was dead. So sudden, so near—within the reach of aid, and yet dead!

"The incident took a strong hold on me. It seemed to say, 'If that had been your case, where would you have gone to?' And the answer my conscience gave was '*Hell*.' I went home, retired to rest, but could not sleep. Next morning, Sunday, I rose, and still *that splash* was ringing in my ears, and that voice 'Hell, if it had been me.' I tried with all my power to throw off the impression; I tried to drive serious thoughts from me; but in vain. I stayed in the house all day, and in the evening I could bear it no longer. I took my Bible and set off for a church where a distinguished minister was announced to preach. When I got there I found it was too late, and I didn't go in. I had seen your meeting announced also, for men only, at eight o'clock, and as the time suited me I thought I would go there. The resolve taken, off I started. I was not sure of the way, and asked a young man to tell me. 'Oh, the City Hall! you needn't go there, you won't get in, the crowd is so great.' I said, 'I'll try.' Something was saying to me, 'Go, go.' I got into the crush. A new difficulty presented itself; I had no ticket. Nevertheless I was resolved to try, and fortunately passed the ticket-collectors without any trouble.

"But let me proceed. Your text was 'Whosoever.' I got interested somehow, then riveted, in the discourse. You said, 'WHOSOEVER means every one, and all who went to hell would stumble over that word, even the greatest sinner that walks the streets of Glasgow.' I saw myself in that list. I saw, as I had never seen before, the freeness, the comprehensiveness of the gospel call, 'Whosoever.' You told a story of one Reuben Johnson; it was exactly my case. Everything you said went

home to my heart ; I was completely broken down, and could not restrain my bursting heart from crying out. I wept like a child. When Mr. Sankey sang 'Come home,' I knew my time was come ; I must now go home to God. I waited behind, wanting to speak to somebody. I saw several ministers about, and I would have given worlds if any of them had come and talked with me ; but no. I went nearer the platform ; the audience, if I remember aright, were singing 'Rock of Ages.' I went up to a side seat and asked a young man if he knew any one I could speak with. He said he would find me a very nice man, a minister, if I waited outside. I waited, but nobody came. I asked another if I could see Mr. Moody, but he could not help me.

"I went down the stairs, and in going down I said, 'Well, if they won't speak to me, surely God will.' I went home, thinking and praying in my heart that God would show me the way home to Himself. I was saying, 'Well, I'll begin and try to love Jesus for what He has done for me.' I was passing down Stockwell Street in this frame of mind, when some persons passed me, singing the refrain of that beautiful hymn, 'I am so glad that Jesus loves me, even me.' The words struck me. I felt as if a load were passing from my heart. 'If He loves me,' I said, 'all I have got to do is to believe in that love of His.' Here I had been trying to love Jesus, when all the while Jesus had been loving me. I put faith in that love, and found peace. 'Yes,' I said, and I stamped my foot on the ground as I said it ; 'yes, though all the devils in hell try to move me from it, I will trust in the love that Jesus has had for me.'

"Such is a brief account of my conversion. I am now resting on the finished work of Christ. He is my all in all. I will do all the little I can for Him who has loved me so much. If this should give you any encouragement in the blessed work you have undertaken in our land, I shall be glad. . . . Pray for me, that I may obtain courage to work and speak out for Jesus. But I want to do it without show ; I have been so wicked.

Pray that I may be enabled to overcome every temptation, to conquer every evil habit, and to trust implicitly and with all my heart in Jesus, who will help in every trial."

A CLERK.

"I left home pretty early, and after working at various places in the country I was sent to Edinburgh, where I was soon initiated into the frivolous amusements and vices incident to the class of young men with whom I associated. My salary being small, I was not able to support much extravagance, and although my income was advanced considerably, it made little or no difference, for it was generally spent on foolish things. In all the pleasures in which we indulged there was, of course, no peace, but *something* within told me I lacked that which every unbeliever lacks, though as for Christ's love being the thing needed, it never entered my head. I envied greatly those young men who seemed to be religiously inclined, and was often ashamed to go out on Sunday, for we occasionally made excursions to Portobello and those places around Edinburgh much frequented by pleasure-seekers on the Lord's-day. But my serious thoughts came to no good. * At length, seeing I was getting no better, and that all my good resolutions were going for nothing, I determined to come to Dundee, where my parents stay, and *try there*. On coming to Dundee I fell in with some kindred spirits, and went on much as usual, not in any open course of sin, but in a way just as certainly leading to destruction as more flagrant acts. After a time, my most intimate companions having left the town, I was left to my own conscience again, and something within me was urging me on to a nobler and better employment of my spare time, which I had hitherto wasted. I then tried education, with an occasional mixing in company, but that was even worse: I had no peace.

"About this time Moody and Sankey came to town, and first one of my companions was converted, and then another, until

I seemed to be left out altogether. You may be sure I was far from happy, and sincerely envied those who were converted. Still I was not willing to give in, and as I assented to all my converted companions said, they wrought assiduously for my conversion.

"Well, one Sunday night, after a great struggle, I thought I would try to pray. But it was of no use, for I was no sooner down on my knees, in fact, I don't think I got down, than up I got and rushed out of the house, the devil putting many thoughts into my mind, the chief of which was, 'It is childish to pray.' This temptation he plied me with for some weeks, but by the grace of God I have got over it now.

"After this I attended several meetings, at which I was greatly affected; but then, as my holidays were at hand, I resolved on putting off salvation until these were over, as I thought it would spoil them. During the time of my holidays all the anxious thoughts seemed to have left me, so much was my attention taken up with the engagements of the season.

"On returning home I found my brother had been converted, and this set me a thinking again. This state of things continued for a short time, until one Sunday night a young man spoke to me about my soul. I left him with the determination to *try it*. My brother having finished his usual nightly prayers, I asked him what to do. He told me, and having prayed with and for me, we went to bed. On Monday I had some further conversation with a young man, who explained the way of salvation more clearly, and I was enabled by the grace of God to accept Jesus. If there is any one thing more than another which I laid hold of it was the words, 'It is finished.' I of course was wanting to *feel*; but God being very gracious to me, I was soon enabled to get rid of that, and now I see it clearer and clearer every day. By His grace I will cling to Him for ever as the Rock of my salvation."

There are several points of interest in this simple narrative.

The unrest of the young man in the midst of pleasure tells of the worm that gnaws at the root of all life without God. The strength and weakness of natural conscience, conscience not illuminated by the Spirit and Word of God, are seen in the circumstance that while the inward monitor testifies to a great want, it can neither tell what precisely the want is, nor where it is to be supplied. The utter impotence of self-help in the matter of salvation finds an illustration in the return of the young man to his father's house; for instead of being nearer the Father in heaven, as he expected, he is as far off as ever, and the gate of life is as strait as before. All devices to heal the wound fail; "education" for the soul with an occasional bait of pleasure for the old man are only "refuges of lies." The suggestion, only too well calculated to suit a young man's ideas, that *prayer is childish*, reveals the subtlety of Satan. The deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the heart is obvious enough in the postponement of reconciliation with God, despite the strivings of the Holy Spirit, until the convenient season *after the holidays* should arrive. To the blind and foolish heart two or three weeks' procrastination and pleasure seems a very small matter; but two or three weeks' forgetfulness of God, slighting His salvation and resisting His Spirit, is a grievous wickedness, and fraught with danger to the soul. And last of all, we mark the riches of the mercy and long-suffering of Him who, in the greatness of His love, follows with unwearied step after the lost sheep until He finds it.

THE YOUNG TRADESMAN.

"I belong to the little town of D——. My father is a school-master, and a God-fearing man. I was brought up religiously. As far back as my memory can go I had thoughts about God, and an eternal world. I knew I could not be saved unless I was converted by the Spirit of God. Sometimes conviction of sin would take hold of me, and I became unhappy. At such

times I used to pray, and in that way my fears were hushed, and I would get on quietly for awhile longer. I see now very clearly that there was no *real prayer* in those prayers. It was a sop to conscience; it was just flattering God, and was no better than a false promise, or a lie. Once in a thunder-storm, I remember, I became greatly alarmed. I feared lest God should strike me dead by the lightning; and I knew that if I died then, I should certainly perish. Many were my prayers and vows at that time, but they all vanished with the storm. After I left home to learn my trade, I used to get letters from my father, in which he counselled me and warned me, and said a great deal about Christ and salvation. These letters annoyed me much. They touched my conscience; and yet I was so much ashamed of anything like religion that I burned the letters, for fear lest my companions should see them and read them.

"In the spring of 1874 I attended — Church in this town (Dundee). One Sabbath I felt a good deal impressed; but I so far overcame my serious thoughts, that I resolved on having my pleasure that Sabbath night as usual. Accordingly, I made up my mind not to attend the evangelistic meeting in the church. Putting on my hat, I was opening the door to go out, when I met Miss — in the face, a lady visitor belonging to the congregation. She was coming in to invite the people of the house to the service. I tried to get past her, but she stood between me and the door. I put my hand on the latch, but there she stood, and began to speak to me about my soul. I was fairly caught. I tried again and again to slip past my tormentor, but it was of no use; she kept her post between me and the door, and I could not be rude. She spoke very plainly, but very kindly, about my need of Christ, and said she would not let me go unless I promised to attend the meeting that night. At length I gave way, and promised to go and hear the gospel instead of spending the evening in Sabbath desecration.

"I see the hand of God in all this now. Had the visitor been a few minutes later I should have been away, and, of course, would have been spending the night in sinful pleasure. Had she come a few minutes earlier, I should have been sitting with the rest in the house, and the lady could have had no opportunity of speaking to me personally. In that case, I should have heard the general invitation to the meeting, and in the mood I was in, I certainly should not have gone to it. But God in His providence so ordered and timed the visit, that the lady opened the door just as I was putting my hand on the latch. I firmly believe the Lord was seeking out a lost sheep, and was shutting me in to His fold.

"I kept my promise, and went to the meeting, which was addressed by the minister of the church and another minister. It was just after Moody and Sankey left Dundee. All my convictions returned upon me, and I was so deeply impressed that I remained to the meeting for inquirers. The conversation did me no good, unless it was in making me more anxious than before. When I came out of the church I did not know what to do, and I stood on the pavement holding on by the iron rails as if my salvation depended on that. Everybody was going away, some of the inquirers rejoicing; but I was most miserable, seeing myself a lost sinner and ready to die. The lady who invited me to the meeting saw me, and coming up spoke to me of Jesus, and set before me the plan of salvation. But I got no deliverance, and went home in distress. I continued in this state for some days, going all the time under a sense of the wrath of God. I attended the meetings every night. One night that week the way of salvation became plain to me as I had never seen it. I was enabled to accept Jesus, and to yield myself to Him, and was filled with joy. My delight in Him, and in His people, was unbounded. I wrote to my father, telling him what the Lord had done for my soul. You may imagine how glad he was. He wrote me back, at the same time

sending me a copy of the *Pilgrim's Progress*; as much as to say, 'George, you are a pilgrim now; therefore, go forward and play the pilgrim's part.' I have since become a member of the Church, and a worker in a small way. The Lord has been very good to me. I am made to feel that it is a battle all the way; but He gives me the victory, and carries me on."

This intelligent young man is known to the writer of these notes. The above is the substance of his statement, which has been corroborated by the lady visitor.

A WORKING MAN.

The following narrative I took down from the lips of a young man, a native of Glen —, in the Highlands of Inverness-shire, now resident in Dundee. From his earliest years, he said, he could remember being often deeply impressed with religious truths, and often in infancy sought to quiet his disturbed heart by means of prayer. In boyhood he was now and again overtaken by thoughts of a serious nature; sometimes he was so much alarmed by the fear of dying unconverted that he would resolve to seek the Lord; but very quickly his fears would pass away, and conversion was again postponed. When a lad he began to feel he could not shake off conviction so easily as before; he could see, though dimly, the folly and sin of the course of procrastination he had hitherto pursued; and he was now compelled to look the question of conversion in the face. One thing was clear. Of this he had no doubt whatever, if he was to be saved, he must undergo a great change—he must be born again. But of the real nature of that radical change he had no very distinct views, beyond the knowledge of the fact that conversion is of God and His grace. He now felt he ought to seek conversion with all his might, and without delay. At the same time, the thought arose in his mind that as conversion was often brought about through the instrumentality of great preachers, it would be well for him to wait until he had an

opportunity of hearing the gospel from the lips of some distinguished minister. It was plain enough that conversion was a great work, and nothing seemed more reasonable than that so mighty a change should be effected by the burning words of some honoured messenger of Christ, one raised far above his fellows in intellect, eloquence, piety, and every divine gift. Then, too, he thought conversion after that fashion would be so sudden, so striking, and bear so clearly-cut a stamp, that he would be able to tell others of it; and would not the story of having been converted by that wonderful man, Mr. —, or Dr. —, be worth telling? and would it not impress others also, and result in much good? Satisfied with this vain scheme, conscience was once more quieted, and conversion was postponed for sufficient reasons, and on a wise and pious footing.

He now sees the folly and wickedness of that theory and plan. He has no doubt it sprang from the depths of his own vain mind; he is sure that the devil also had a hand in it. Pride was at the bottom of it; for although he believed that conversion in the manner proposed would advance the glory of God, he was really seeking to glorify himself in it. It would be a poor conversion, and scarce worth the having, he imagined, if it were brought about through the agency of ordinary means, through the instrumentality of some plain, hum-drum preacher scarcely heard of beyond the limits of his congregation. He is convinced that this was nothing else than a Satanic scheme of procrastination, drawn with subtlety enough to last a life-time; and he marvels that God even in His long-suffering bore with this piece of wicked presumption, and still more, that He ever visited him with mercy and salvation.

At the same time he was sincere in his foolishness, and when he came south in search of employment he went to hear the preachers of greatest fame, first in Edinburgh and afterwards in Dundee. Often did he take his place in the church of some one of the best-known ministers, and set himself to drink in

the words of the preacher, in the hope that now at length a mysterious power would begin to play upon his heart, and he would need only to sit still while the process of conversion should be going on. He was utterly disappointed, and became more and more unhappy. But if great ministers had not been employed for his conversion, perhaps great evangelists would serve the purpose! Moody and Sankey came; he went to hear them; but Moody and Sankey made no difference. His vexation and bewilderment went on increasing; when one day he attended a church in Dundee. The minister was absent; a stranger occupied the pulpit. The preaching was of the ordinary run, and rose to no height of eloquence or power of any kind. But the subject was a glorious one, such as even a child or a babbler might, if in the Spirit, treat with majestic force and heart-moving tenderness. It was "the blood that cleanseth from all sin."

The young man was not expecting to hear anything of interest or value from the poor nobody who was stopping the pulpit gap for the day. But the voice that is stronger far than the noise of many waters, the voice of the Son of God, in the gentle accents of the Spirit dropping into the soul's ear, summoned this halting, half-hearted seeker to decision. Thoughts of the preciousness and efficacy of the blood of Christ came stealing into his heart, and ere ever he was aware he found himself in the agony of a great crisis. On going home a voice seemed to say to him, "Now or never." He resolved on seeking salvation as he had never sought it. That Sabbath night was spent on his knees. He saw he had been sinning grievously, especially in slighting salvation, and in trampling on the blood of Christ. For several hours he poured out his soul in the confession of sin, crying for mercy, for the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, for immediate conversion and deliverance from his sins. Now he felt he must be saved or die; and when weeping and crying, and the darkness of despair was closing all around, God was pleased to reveal His

Son in him. The sense of the forgiveness of sin through the blood of Jesus filled his heart. He rose from his knees a new man. Filled with joy unspeakable, he paced his room praising God and extolling Jesus, whose love and glory well-nigh overwhelmed his bursting heart. He felt as if the sun had suddenly arisen and was pouring floods of light into the room, now the birth-chamber of his soul, and the banqueting-house of the King. He could only exclaim, as he walked up and down conversing with and magnifying his God and Saviour, "It is grace, grace, all grace, nothing but grace." Now, if he could but call in the world, the universe, to hear what his heart burned to speak concerning the Lord Jesus! or, if he could but die for Christ! The memory of that night is, he feels, the one ineffaceable record of his life; it is the one event, the remembrance of which must go down to death with him, nay, must be one of the things of eternity.

Shortly afterwards he became a member of a church in Dundee, and is now a Sabbath-school teacher. He is characterised by sobriety of mind as well as fervour of spirit, possessing, as he does, a larger grasp of divine truth than usually falls to the possession of young Christians, and a deeper experience than is common at the opening stage of spiritual life. Whilst he continues to rejoice in the Lord, he is painfully conscious of conflict with sin and Satan. The adversary, he thinks, often suggests that he is ashamed of Christ, and is too cowardly to stand up for Jesus as he ought to do; and then when he does confess Christ amidst the ribaldry and opposition of ungodly fellow-workmen, the devil charges him with presumption, with indiscretion. Nevertheless, he goes on and prospers.

THE OLD SAILOR.

At the close of a meeting one Sabbath evening not long since, Mr. C——, a clerk in this town, and formerly a sailor, told me the story of his conversion, which I will repeat as nearly as

possible in his own words. "I was a seeker of salvation," said he, "for twenty years. When a boy at school I learned one text of Scripture, which stuck to me ever after. That text was, 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Now and again the great question would stir in my heart; but there was no settlement of it. I went to sea. Often when on watch I would occupy my thoughts by recalling the text, which I would keep repeating; and often I longed for daylight, when I might retire to my hammock and read the chapter in which the text is found. I thought that something in the chapter might throw that light on the verse which I earnestly sought for; but I found that I could not reach my favourite text without stumbling over the solemn words, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' And often did I steer past that awful word to try and get quietly anchored in my favourite verse; but all in vain. Sometimes, when out on the yard-arm rocking in a storm, I feared that God was about to shake me off into the sea in judgment on me for not believing. Then I would resolve to make sure and believe as soon as I got down; but somehow I never got to believe. On shore, when my shipmates were running into every excess, the old text would come up in my thoughts, and in this way I was preserved from dissipation. It was thus, I believe, through God's mercy, that my brain was kept cool for thinking and seeing things in the light of eternity. In my gayest moments the thought of the dreadful alternative, perishing or living for ever with God, would rise before me and make me sad. I came home and settled down on shore; but the same word that had followed me all over the world was constantly hovering about me, although I never really received it in faith. When Moody and Sankey came to Dundee, I went to hear them; but their preaching and their singing did nothing for me; I continued as I had been for long. After the Americans left, I went one evening to an evan-

gelistic meeting in St. Peter's Church. One of the speakers had for his subject the parable of the prodigal son. In the course of his address he said, 'The prodigal resolved; but he did more, he arose, and came to his father.' This word went home to my heart. Hitherto, I believe pride had hindered me. I resolved, I arose, I went. My heart was filled with joy. I went home; but so great was my happiness, that I never closed an eye that night. Next morning I arose as much refreshed as if I had slept for two days, and I have been enabled to hold on in this way ever since. Immediately after my conversion I began to consider what I should do for the Saviour. I feel deeply concerned about the sailors in our port. I am resolved, the Lord helping me, to do something for the sailors."

Such is the story of a rarely gifted and interesting man, who had been "a seeker of salvation for twenty years."

THE OLD SCEPTIC.

At the close of an evangelistic service one evening in spring, a weary-looking, grey-haired man was introduced to me. I was struck both with his personal appearance and the interesting manner in which he made his statement. His face was pale, his eye gleamed with intelligence, and he spoke in a very frank and decided way. "Long ago," he said, "when I lived in Glasgow, one night somebody belonging to the house brought home a book advocating infidel opinions. I read the book, and in that evil hour I drank in its sweet poison. I thirsted for more of the same thing. There was plenty more of the same thing to be had. I greedily devoured it, and became a thorough sceptic. I rejected Christianity. I disbelieved in a hereafter, a heaven, or a hell. I scouted the idea of judgment to come. I flung away all fear of God, and as a matter of course I lived as I liked. In this way I went on until I came to Dundee. After I came here somehow a vague, undefined fear that I was wrong began to thrust itself in upon me. When Moody and

Sankey held their meetings in this town the unpleasant feeling took a more definite shape, and had a more powerful hold on me. This I suppose was due to so much being said about conversion and salvation. I struggled hard to suppress those troublesome thoughts; but do what I would they pressed in upon me. A certain Unitarian minister announced that he would expose the hollowness of Revivalism, and I went to hear him in the hope I should pick up something to prop up my tottering unbelief; but in vain. All the time I felt strongly disposed to argue against the preacher. I saw how easily I could refute his arguments, which struck me as being singularly weak. Looking at the question from his point of view, I could not help thinking that if there be anything in Christianity there must be much more than Unitarianism affects. I went home more dissatisfied than before. At length my mental disturbance became so great that I was forced to look the Bible fairly in the face. I came up here to the meetings, and now I frankly admit my scepticism won't do. The last resource of doubt is a mere 'peradventure'; but then this peradventure cuts both ways; it may be 'peradventure it is not so,' or it may be 'peradventure it is so.' I am a long way past this now. I not only believe in Christianity, but I am convinced of these two things—first, my great enemy is unbelief, and secondly, this unbelief is due entirely to a thoroughly bad heart. Tell me, sir, do you think Christ can do anything for a man like me?"

By this time the man, who was at first very calm, was evidently deeply moved, and it was touching to see how he struggled to suppress his emotion. It was not difficult to deal with him; it never is difficult to deal with a man when once he is thoroughly convinced of unbelief and the utter badness of the heart. One grain of conviction of sin is worth more than a cartload of apologetics, or a mountain of mere logic, good though these things are in their own place for bringing men to the faith and the feet of Jesus. A pungent sense of the badness of the

heart before God, and the hideous character of sin, is an admirable and never-failing remedy for scepticism and all manner of heresy. This inquirer was ultimately enabled to profess faith in the Lord Jesus. "I am resolved," he said, "God helping me, to take my stand *with Christ*." A year and a half has come and gone, and the old sceptic is now a member of a church here, and a stedfast believer.

THE FORMALIST'S CONVERSION.

To illustrate the extent of the recent movement, and the manifold workings of the Holy Ghost, an instance may be here given of the awakening of a sinner without the intervention of human instrumentality or means. P. K——, a middle-aged man, of average intelligence, quiet, staid disposition, and phlegmatic temperament, who had been a professing Christian and a member of the Church for many years, came in one Sabbath evening in a state of profound mental distress. I was the more astonished at this, because I knew he was a man of the strictest morality, and ready-for every good work, for he had even taken an earnest part in a home mission. "Up till this morning," he said, "I was in the enjoyment of perfect peace of mind. For many years I have loved the house of God, and enjoyed the services of the Church. Nobody could have listened more attentively to the preaching of the Word than I did. I kept myself out of the world and its ways. I thought I had good reason to believe I was a real Christian. Whenever the discourse bore upon sinners, and an appeal was made to the unconverted, I put it past myself, always supposing that it was well with my soul. I even tried to lead others to Christ. At one time, indeed, I felt some stirrings of conviction of sin, but I quashed the beginnings of anxiety, and did not even tell my wife the fears I then had. So getting my former peace restored I went on as before. Last night I went to bed as usual in perfect health of body and quietness of mind. I awoke this

morning about my usual time, five o'clock. The very moment I awoke my heart was seized with an extraordinary sense of my sinfulness in the sight of God. My whole life started up before me, and I could see nothing in it but sin. I stood at the judgment seat of God, and His holiness was more than I could bear. I stood condemned. No words can describe what I have experienced this day. It has been the longest day of my life. Since that hour in the morning I have stood stripped and naked before that Holy Being whose eye I feel even now searching my inmost soul. I never saw till this day that I am lost. There is an end of my righteousness now. My peace is gone for ever; certainly it was a hollow peace. I feel I must die, and I am afraid lest in this state; for God is judging me, and I have no right to live. Oh, sir, if I die as I am, most undoubtedly I shall be damned. I see nothing but sin, sin, sin. I dare not so much as look for mercy. I feel as if it would be far too much for one like me to expect mercy. Ah, sir, I could conceal my former convictions, but this I cannot hide! No sooner did the thoughts of that holy God seize hold on me than I was forced to waken my wife and tell her, although she could do nothing to help me. If it would bring me relief I would tell the whole world what a case I am in. I fear to go to bed lest I awake in hell. Oh, what am I to do?"

It was affecting to see that strong man bound in so great an agony of spirit. Conversation, prayer, every attempt to impart instruction, to point to the Lamb of God, and to lead into the way of peace, only made me to feel the more the utter powerlessness of human instrumentality apart from the forth-putting of the effectual grace of the Holy Spirit. For about three days he continued very much in the same despairing state, when, as he trusts, God by His Spirit revealed His Son in him. It was with singular calmness and significance that, as he communicated the fact of his deliverance, he said, "I am now singing of His mighty love, *mighty to save.*"

THE GAY MAN OF THE WORLD.

Mr. —, by birth and education a gentleman, in the matter of religion sceptical, though not an avowed infidel, and in character a thorough-going man of the world, one night, to the surprise of all who knew him, appeared at an inquiry-meeting in this town, and took his place among the anxious. His parents are Christians, and he had been trained in religion from his earliest days. He had had serious thoughts when a boy. At the age of eleven, hearing of prostrations, such as occurred in the Irish revival, he arrived at the conclusion that in order to be converted he must first be prostrated physically. Like older people, he was very glad to find a decent excuse for dismissing his anxious thoughts.

On growing to manhood, he plunged into the world of fashion and gaiety. He still maintained, however, a certain amount of respect for religion. When he saw professing Christians, persons who, to his knowledge, took their places periodically at the Lord's table, present at places of worldly amusement, he felt shocked. Such conduct seemed to him grossly inconsistent. At the same time, probably, like other men of the world, he quietly blessed himself for the possession of at least one good quality: he was consistent. At one stage of his course in worldliness he encountered a grave religious question. Somehow, he was led into a little speculation in his own thoughts on the subject of predestination. On reflection, he settled in his mind that there must be divine decrees, and therefore that the doctrine of election is true. Thus, so far, well. He then proceeded to ascertain if he were one of the elect. On examining himself, he concluded that there was no sign of his being elected to eternal life; and then he drew the foolish and wicked inference, that since he was evidently not elected, he might as well live in this world as he liked. This was nothing else than a desperate effort

of the deceitful heart to get as much sin as possible with the greatest possible peace of mind. After this he launched out afresh, and further than ever on the perilous sea of frivolity and godless pleasure. Having at length succeeded in finding a good excuse, as he imagined, for the utter forgetfulness of God and the interests of eternity, he became a devotee of the world, and every day grew more sceptical and hard of heart.

His parents, deeply concerned for his spiritual welfare, induced him to attend a meeting held by the American evangelists in this city. But while his mother and sister and all around were weeping under the more solemn appeals of the preacher, he only laughed. The laugh was doubtless from the shallower heart; deeper down there, was probably even then a trouble, which that mocking laughter but thinly veiled. This happened on a Friday night. On the Monday following his mother, exceedingly distressed by the profane conduct of her son, and seeing her almost last hope of his conversion thus rudely shattered, without the knowledge of any one, sent to the noon prayer-meeting a request that supplication might be offered on behalf of this impenitent man. He had no intention of attending the meetings any more; but in the providence of God it was otherwise overruled. A gentleman from the country was that night to stay at his father's house, a few miles out of town. It was arranged that he should drive the stranger home from the meeting, and as a matter of courtesy he accompanied him to the service. In the course of his address Mr. Moody told an anecdote, in which he alluded to heaven, "that bright world above," when the thought suddenly struck our man of the world that all his family—father, mother, with the rest—were going to share in that blessed inheritance; *was he alone to be left out?* He was transfixed. At the close of the meeting he entered the inquiry-room. That very night, as he trusts, the light began, though dimly at first, to dawn upon him. At once he took up a decided position among the young believers; and from his

talents, character, and social standing, bids fair, by the grace of God, to become an eminently useful Christian.

THE YOUNG ATHEIST.

J. M. introduced himself to me at the close of a meeting in a country town, one night in July, last year (1874). He is a clerk, well-informed, and of pensive disposition. He said he did not believe in a God. His story affected me deeply. It was told with perfect frankness, utter absence of conceit, and in a tone of the most intense sadness. After some conversation, I found he was a doubter of the milder sort. He would not affirm that there was no God ; he simply could not find any trace of a God, and he was certain he had no belief in a divine personality. In this respect his soul was a blank, the universe was a blank. But he had no hatreds, no bitterness, no quarrels with religion or religious people. He was glad other people could believe and find solace in religion. He could wish to possess what some Christians seem to enjoy. But there was positively nothing in him on which to build religion. As he had no faith, he had no hope for the future, he had no sense of sin, or anything that could enter into personal religion. He doubted even if he was sincere in the slight desire he thought he felt to get out of his present way and become a believer. He was evidently on the brink of the terrible pit of despair and disgust of life into which many atheists finally sink.

After conversation and discussion I felt at a great loss, not knowing what to say. Moved by the deep and settled depression under which he evidently laboured, touched also with his perfect candour, and sensible of my own helplessness in the matter, I could not but inwardly pray for direction. I saw plainly that arguments from without for the being of a God was only like bringing lighted candles into a dark room for the benefit of a blind man. As for the Bible, what to him was the voice of one in whose existence he did not believe? It was

more empty than the hollow winds. Suddenly it struck me that the only thing in him on which I could work was *his misery*. With this thought in my mind, I resumed the conversation, the drift of which may be put in a few words.

Suppose a case. A man is out in a wilderness, benighted, alone, lost, and helpless. The only thing he can do is to cry aloud for help. Even if there is no response, and he fears there is nobody within sound of his voice, he will naturally enough continue to call for help, especially as it is his only chance. Well then, on the supposition that there may be a God, and that it is possible He may hear and help you, ought you not to pray? It is your only chance. You are unhappy; more unhappy you say you could scarcely be. To cry out in that great darkness will not render you more miserable. Nay, the very effort to find relief will in some measure relieve you; it will let the misery out.

The force of this was admitted by the unhappy doubter. The result of the conversation was that J. M. solemnly resolved to try prayer, to cry out in the dark, to persevere in it, and see what would come of it.

About a month after this he stated in a letter that he had been carrying out his resolution, trying to pray to the Unknown. Several times a day he had prayed during those weeks, but it seemed only like beating the air; he had got no light, not a ray. Yet a certain indefinable something in prayer appeared to strengthen him in his purpose to persevere in this course for some time longer.

Two months more passed, and he had day by day bent his knees to supplicate help from a possible God, a possible Hearer of prayer. But there was no answer. There was nothing but the melancholy echo of his own fearful voice. He had betaken himself to the careful study of the Scriptures, but not one ray of light did the Bible yield him. At times he thought he had a "sort of hope;" but on close examination this hope

appeared to have no foundation. It vanished at a touch, it dissolved before a penetrating glance. It was therefore, he feared, a delusion. There was manifestly an incipient sense of sin, and an awakening desire, however faint, to get out of sin. Clearly there was in all this some signs of progress toward the light; but he did not admit it, he could not see it. He was resolved, however, to go on praying, although the praying seemed to himself to be only a form or a farce.

For nine months more he continued to plod on in this weary and to himself seemingly unprofitable course. Several times every day he tried to pray. Oftentimes he was tempted to give it up entirely for ever. What was the use of it? He felt he had no heart for it. To a thoughtful mind this temptation must have possessed great and almost irresistible force. For if there is no God, what is the use of praying? If there is a God, this heartless form, this merely selfish desire to escape from misery, must be a wicked mockery of Him! He had read the Bible too, but to no purpose. If it possessed the great secret, it refused to yield it up to him. Or, perhaps, he was too frivolous or earthly to grasp it. Such at least was his own estimate of his Bible-reading. But still he prayed, still he kept peering into the dark night, and ere the twelve months of indescribable anxiety and toil had well expired he was enabled to believe. He found God, where only a sinful man can find Him, in His own Son, the Saviour of sinners, and through His own Word. He has no special light on any one passage of Scripture, he says, and no joyous experience. But he believes in God; he believes in Christ. He has been emboldened, he tells in a letter, to confess Jesus before men by joining the company of His people at His table. This public confession has sensibly strengthened his faith, which he describes as very weak. But now his faith and hope are in God; and he has been enabled to declare himself as being on the Lord's side. The battle of a year is fought and won. It was surely a long night, and a weary, woeful cry,

involving twenty times more toil and anguish than most men undergo in entering the kingdom. But the day has dawned ; the cry of the lost one has gone up to the ear of the never-wearying Seeker.

“And all through the mountains, thunder-riven,
And up from the rocky steep,
There rose a cry to the gate of heaven;
‘Rejoice! I have found my sheep!
And the angels echoed around the throne,
‘Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own.’”



CHAPTER XI.

YOUNG CONVERTS.

YOUNG converts are so named because they have recently assumed the Christian profession. It is the right of every man to make a declaration of his faith; and on each individual rests the responsibility of the declaration made. No period of probation is enjoined in Scripture during which the professing believer is to be treated with suspicion or distrust. The holiest man on earth, being imperfect, stands so far in need of "the judgment of charity;" and if we are to follow the rule, "to do to others as we would that others should do to us," if we are to observe the commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," then assuredly we should take into the embrace of our sympathies the very least of the little ones that profess to be disciples of Jesus.

The treatment and training of young Christians is a work of the highest importance. Even when conversions are genuine, results may widely differ. Two men recover from the same disease, but with this difference: one attains to full vigour of health, while the other, owing to unskilful treatment or neglect of means, carries the dregs of the malady in an enfeebled body all his days. Two men are liberated from prison; they are equally free, but with a difference; for while one moves with unfettered limbs, the other drags on his ankles wherever he goes

11. a heavy chain, whose clanking pains every ear. Conversions may be genuine and saving, but not equally thorough. Although sinlessness is not attainable in the body, the measure of Christian stature reached in this life is often largely dependent, under God, on the first start and the early training of the young disciple.

Paul says he cherished the young believers of Thessalonica with the tenderness of a nurse. "We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children ; so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us." The babe in Christ is the tenderest of all newborn creatures. The eye of faith is usually so feeble at first that it may be easily dazzled with too much light, or it may be injured by a false glare. The young Christian may be hurt by feeding on the meat of strong men, or he may be pampered to sickness on the delicacies of the gospel. He may be swaddled in hard doctrine or stringent discipline until his ailing and crippled limbs refuse the obedience of a holy cheerfulness. Or he may be exposed until spiritual nakedness and want have grown into that chronic Christian pauperism which is the bane of many a church. He may be nursed so long as to be stereotyped in Christian dwarfhood, and so remain a babe for the rest of his time. Or he may be scared with cautions and warnings till at length his whole spiritual life is filled with phantoms and haunted with grim but shadowy forms of terror. Young grace may be developed into a most ungracious thing, or it may grow to be the loveliest of all lovely forms, the very picture and visible image of the altogether lovely One. Much depends on training whether your rose-bush shall bear a maximum of thorns with a minimum of roses, or conceal to the sense its every prickle amidst the modest beauty of its flowers and the sweet breath of its perfume. A true faith may become hyperspiritual, impracticable, crooked ; or it may grow up in Christian wisdom

and holy beauty, and become at once the most heavenly and practical of all things sensible and human.

The position therefore of those who are setting out on the Christian course is one of peculiar difficulty and danger, and they need much sympathy and help. The two main evils to which they are exposed are backsliding and presumption. They may go too slow, or they may go too fast; they may slide back, or slide headlong. Out of these two forms of spiritual dishealth, declension and radicalism, spring many sore troubles; and when they reach their worst stage it is hard to say which presents the most hideous spectacle, the naked, motionless, crumbling skeleton of decay, or spiritual pride all alive with a thousand maggots. But the Holy Spirit is pleased to bless means for preserving the lambs of the flock. The one great safeguard against every form of error and evil is, by the grace of God, systematic training in "every good word and work."

In view of the endless varieties of temperament, capacity, social position, previous training in good or ill, and a thousand influences at work in the moulding of character, it is obvious enough that in none of his functions does the pastor stand more in need of wisdom than in dealing with young converts. On sound teaching, seasonable counsel, and practical sympathy, under God, it largely depends whether your babe shall become a hunchback or a man, a spiritual oddity or a well-balanced saint. For want of care, youthful earnestness may shrivel into a self-observant mysticism, or it may shoot up into a barren rod of spiritual pride, of no use save for the warning or the chastisement of others. On the one hand, if a vigorous, healthy individuality is not developed in young Christians they may become mere parasites, killing the Church on which they creep and lean. On the other hand, the radicalism of new-born zeal, if not pruned and trained, may grow into the Upas tree of separatism. We have seen the young convert grasp the well-sharpened sickle, and reap a harvest for the Master and for eternity ere his sun was

well up in the heavens. We have also seen the day spent in strife, the Christian turning his sickle into a sword, and the sun going down on a field of blood. But this need not be. Happily, in countless instances, we see the young, crude, impulsive convert, through wise and loving treatment, become all that is really "good, and beautiful, and true;" so that if there be any virtue or any praise, his is the virtue that blesses all, both the just and the unjust, and his the praise that is written in golden characters on a holy and a useful life.

In the recent movement the attention of ministers and churches has been specially directed to the importance of a seasonable and thorough training and supervision of the young converts. This part of the work, it is felt, to be efficiently prosecuted, ought to be conducted in a more systematic and business-like way than has hitherto generally been followed. Two or three points of some moment may be here noticed.

We ought to take the young converts into our warmest sympathies. Pastors and Christians of experience should enter into their feelings, and rejoice in their joy. Why should we damp their happiness by standing aloof, or by pouring forth words of freezing coldness and biting suspicion? We do not forbid a child to eat his cake because some one somewhere was somehow suffocated by something. We do not bid the young soldier put on mourning because it is only too probable that some of his regiment will one day fall in battle. You do not counsel the bride to be sad because the honeymoon will not last for ever. If one invites you to celebrate the birth of a son and heir to his house, you do not go to the feast with a little coffin under your arm.

Young life is ever joyful; this seems to be a universal law. The first experience of human life is the pleasure of sense. It is clearly the will of the bountiful Creator that even fallen man should at the threshold of life drink deep of His goodness in things material. Unbelief, irreligion, hatred of God, and a host

of other evils, spring from one great root. That root is the Satanic lie that God is not good. And save for the fragrant memories of childhood's innocent joys, many a struggler battling with the storms of life would have been swamped in utter atheism and perdition long ere the life-boat of the gospel had appeared on the horizon of the troubled waters. This is no less true of the Christian life. Its first real experience is usually an experience of blessedness; for "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace." Is it not the will of our Father in heaven that His children should at the very dawn of childhood in Christ drink deep of His love in superabounding measures of grace, mercy, and peace? There are believers who in the hour of darkness and tempest would have made shipwreck of their faith, save for the ineffaceable memory of some "hill Mizar" of rapt communion, or some "Elim" of rare spiritual enjoyment in their early Christian days. Man was launched into being in a paradise. Israel, redeemed from Egypt, entered not the wilderness until victory, joy, and exultant song prepared the way. Exuberant even to enthusiasm was the joy of the New Testament Church whilst yet in her cradle. Jesus began to teach His disciples with the Beatitudes: He would have them know the perfect blessedness of His yoke to begin with. Some fearful teachers begin with the Bewares, and seem incapable of ever reaching the Beatitudes. They seem to think that the proper response to the glad tidings of great joy is a life-long groan. Let us in this follow the Master: first the Beatitudes, and then the Bewares. Let Miriam and her sisters dance; the wilderness will be reached soon enough.

It is scarcely necessary to observe that *young Christians should first and foremost be trained in the knowledge of the Scriptures*. While the whole contents of the Word are to be prized and searched, a systematized knowledge of the great doctrines of grace is invaluable both for experience and work. I have known a Christian attain to eminent piety and useful

ness, very much through his having at the outset firmly grasped the great central truth of the gospel—substitution. It seemed to fill his mind and heart, and swayed his whole soul, making him strong and happy. I have also known a minister whose whole ministry was transfigured by the clearness, power, and tenderness with which he constantly set forth the doctrine of the believer's oneness with Christ. The fuller radiance of this truth seemed to shed lustre on his life as well as his teaching.

To be able even to state clearly and accurately the plan of salvation in its grand leading features is no small advantage. By the possession and right use of this knowledge you may be enabled to withstand the assaults which Satan too successfully makes on those whose views are hazy, or held with a feeble grasp. In this way, too, you will be able to guide an inquirer, and give a good sound reason for the hope that is in you. Nothing can supersede the Word, or its simple use; but a knowledge of its great doctrines in their logical sequence, in their connections with one another, and in their arch-like completeness, is a clear gain to every Christian.

One of the first great lessons of the Christian life is learning to walk by faith and not by sense. To exchange the comforts of happy frames for the purer calm and more spiritual rest of simple reliance on the Word, is seldom easily effected. It is the weaning of infant grace. It is to pass from the more sensible or sensational experience of consolation to the more spiritual exercise of faith and holy principle. The sudden outburst of apple-blossom, in all its rare beauty, is followed by a disappearance of the richly-tinted leaves and an apparent retrogression, if not utter decay. It is only apparent, however; for the naked and unlovely little green thing, that seems left behind only to lament the departed glory, is destined by a process of slow development to grow into a new and more permanent form of beauty in the ripening fruit. So often it is in the history of a Christian life. The flush and brilliance of first love must give place to a

stronger, sterner form of life and goodness. At this transition stage there is always more or less danger. When the young corn is passing from its first stage of life, during which it derived nourishment and vigour from the parent seed, now at length wholly exhausted and decayed, the tender blade grows pale and sickly, and the entire field looks sere and yellow. But when the transition is effected, and the plant has achieved independence of the parent seed-corn by striking its newly-formed roots into the soil, it quickly recovers its freshness, and shoots up with constantly-increasing vitality and force. In his earlier joys and ongoings, the young convert lives for the most part on the substance of the first great baptism of the Spirit in the new and wonderful blessing of conscious peace with God and the germ of gracious truth planted in the heart. The transition to a life of faith rather than feeling, of fixed principle rather than veering frames, to a stern doing of the truth as well as a joyful receiving of it, is frequently painful in the extreme.

There is danger, too, as well as pain. The ship loosed from her moorings, and dropping down the river with gay streamers and amid joyful voices, is a pretty enough spectacle; but there is serious work at hand in the critical passage of the bar ere the open sea is reached and the voyage fairly begun. For lack of guiding at this stage, young Christians sometimes suffer permanent hurt. Losing their sensible joy, and not knowing how to recover themselves, they sink into despondency, which the old divines termed the devil's bath; for it is in the waters of soul-melancholy that Leviathan disports himself. At such a time the young convert is strongly tempted to make up in worldly pleasure what he has lost in spiritual joy. In other cases, in which there is no return to the world, the believer falls into dull, heartless, and unprofitable ways. Timely counsel may set the young Christian on the right track. "I have lost my joy, and I fear I have lost my Saviour," said a young convert to me one day. "Perhaps," I replied, "you have been following Him

too much for the loaves and fishes of comfort, and He is now teaching you to follow Him for His own sake." Pointing to Isaiah l. 10, and showing her how she ought to trust the Lord in the dark, she suddenly brightened up, and said, "Oh, I see! we should trust our Heavenly Father in the dark; for although it is often nicht wi' us, it is aye daylight wi' Him."

It is much to be desired that *young converts should at the very outset learn the great secret of maintaining unbroken as far as possible the continuity of peace and fellowship with God.* You snatch your morning portion; you anticipate by prayer and supplication, as far as possible, the wants and temptations of the day, and hasten forth to the battle. Long ere the noontide divides the day, it may be, a hasty word has leapt out at the unguarded door of your lips, or some unholy thought or feeling has disturbed the harmony of your spirit, or your steps have reeled into the region of the forbidden. Forthwith the dark shadow of guilt falls across your path; a cloud hides the face of your Father in heaven. What are you to do? Wait for the quiet evening hour, when you can recall your thoughts, ponder the path of your feet, confess your sin, wash anew in the cleansing blood, and by a protracted, perhaps painful, effort of prayer and renewed consecration recover your footing of peace and fellowship. In that case you have been living in sin all the time from the moment of your slip. What sin? The greatest of all sins, the parent of every sin, the sin of unbelief. During these hours you virtually, if not presumptuously, deny the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God. "What!" says the Adversary, "would you hurry out of your sin, in the very heat of it, into the presence of God?" So much thought, so much feeling, so much exercise of soul, humiliation and prayer, you imagine, are essential to the efficacy of the blood of Christ. You believe the lie, and fall into the hands of Satan. With a sense of guilt in your heart you can do nothing aright; nothing in the spirit of loving, filial obedience; you are sinning all the time. Into

what a wilderness of doubt, temptation, and sorrow have many Christians wandered for weary days and months because they did not step back into the light the first moment of conscious straying! In effect despising the precious blood of Christ, and delaying their return to the Lord until a more convenient season, they have, through ignorance, folly, and the subtlety of the devil, placed between themselves and Jesus a continent of deadness, backsliding, and unbelief.

Now, the error lies in imagining that time and place are essential to confession and forgiveness. As if the blood of Jesus had no efficacy apart from a certain amount of religious exercises or spiritual discipline, which is in substance the Popish doctrine of penance. The truth is, at all times, and in every place, the shop, the field, the mill, the market, the street, the crowd, the very moment consciousness of guilt begins to cloud and clog the spirit, we ought in the swift and instantaneous upward glancing of our thoughts confess the sin, and believing, as the Word of God warrants us in believing, in the immediate efficacy of the atoning blood of Christ we shall at once anew realize peace, and recover conscious fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Let there be no delay, not so much as one moment. False humility will suggest, that to rush at once into the presence of God is to add presumption to your guilt. The presumption lies in delay. Such delay is nothing else than continuing in sin under pretence of honouring the Father; it is a despising of the atoning sacrifice for the time; it is to deny the truth of God, and to make Him a liar. To repair at once to the blood of cleansing, and thus anew to enter into the light of the presence and love of God, is to believe and obey; anything else is disobedience and sin. This in substance is *holiness by faith*. The connexion between justification and sanctification lies here. Realized forgiveness, peace, and fellowship, form the threefold link. Thus the Godward impulse is communicated to the soul. Thus the mightiest of all spiritual

motives, the constraining love of Christ, propels the righted bark of faith by an invincible force in its heavenward career.

Consecration and the cross are of vital moment. A full, hearty, confiding surrender to Jesus is the true way of taking up the cross,—a full surrender, soul, body, and spirit. With Ananias and Sapphira in view, let there be no reserve. Let it be hearty and confiding; no misgiving, no dread of consequences, and no drawing back. Let this consecration be renewed day by day, for this is the “daily” cross to which the Master calls. Touching were the words of gratitude addressed by a condemned criminal to Philip Doddridge, who had procured for him a six weeks’ respite. On his way to the scaffold he knelt on the pavement stones opposite the house of that godly minister and blessed him, saying, in explanation of his feelings, “Sir, I feel that every drop of blood in my body belongs to you.” Was he thus grateful for a few days added to a miserable life, and to Him to whom we owe eternal life shall we say less? “Lord, every drop of blood in my body belongs to Thee.”

“What shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” is the arithmetic which every inquirer must study. “How much owest thou unto my Lord?” is the higher mathematics of the young convert. The cost must be counted, and the cross taken up. There always have been, there always will be, plausible attempts made to achieve the impossible feat of serving both God and mammon. “Let us make the cross lighter,” say some; so they chip off a little here and a little there, till at length the cross is chipped to no cross. Others will get their cross well lined and padded with worldly pleasure, so that the very thing ordained to crucify the flesh comforts it and keeps it alive. It is an ill-omened question, “How much of the world may I have along with Christ and salvation?” The question of the genuine and right-hearted convert is, How much of the world can I give up for Him who gave His all for me? How much can I sacrifice for Him who

sacrificed Himself for me? How much grace and holiness can I possibly acquire on earth? How much blessedness and glory in heaven? This view of the matter cuts clean, and leaves no room for dubious inquiries and casuistries concerning gay assemblies, dancings, operas, oratorios, worldly companionships, or unequal yokes. This line may be reckoned too hard and fast by some; but that is because they are on the wrong side of it. Those who drink deep of the love of Christ can have no relish for the gaieties of the world. All who practically enter into the spirit of this one word, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure," will escape the spiritual hazards and losses, as well as the shame and guilt of those who bow to Christ in the morning and beck to the world at night. Mr. Facing-both-ways is still alive. He makes his appearance sometimes in the wake of a revival. He can sing with saints and dance with sinners. But with all his varied accomplishments he has not learned the first great lesson of Christ, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Like Israel at the Red Sea, every follower of Jesus is sooner or later brought into some grave crisis. Confronted by threatening tribulation, the alternative of a heavy cross, or a sinful escape from it, is set before him. If the cross is taken up in faith and in heart of good cheer, a pathway is opened up where none appeared, and the believer finds a more than golden reward in being lifted up to a higher region of grace and fellowship with his Lord. In the event of failure to take up the cross, the Christian, in consequence of having thus grieved the Holy Spirit and dishonoured his Master, will too probably sink down for life to the poor, mean level of a feeble, half-hearted, hesitating profession, neither noble nor happy. The young convert should bear in mind that to be decided, to be out and out, and in a humble but, through Christ, fearless spirit to nail his colours to the

most is to escape a thousand allurements and snares. More than that; the purest joys and the rarest honours in the kingdom of God are ever reached by a cheerful and thorough obedience to Christ, by a brave, self-sacrificing endurance of the cross.

Conformity to the world in any one thing is evil, only evil. It lowers the tone of spiritual health, and renders sickly the whole inner man; it lessens the value, and weakens the force of Christian testimony; it enfeebles the worker, and mars his usefulness; it retards the soul's growth, and renders lofty attainments impracticable; it dims the vision of the eternal, disturbs peace, and clouds assurance; it vexes the hearts of the faithful, discredits the cause of Christ, stumbles weak consciences, confirms worldlings in impenitence and contempt for religion, grieves the Holy Spirit, and, in short, entails much damage to the soul in time and unspeakable loss in eternity.

If you would shun evil works, you must shun evil workers. Of this and the other worldly amusements it may be asked, "Where is the sin?" Here is another question, "Where is the harm?" There may be harm where there is no sin; harm, too, that leads to sin. To hurt your spirit, to lower the tone of spirituality, is itself a sin. Even if it were not, it is too great a loss to incur for the sake of amusement. "But we ought to conciliate the world, and so win them for Christ." Yes; you may conciliate the world by conforming to it; that is the only conciliation the world will accept. But such conciliation is good neither for the world nor the Christian. Who ever heard of the kingdom of God being promoted by opera-goers? Who imagines that perishing souls owe anything to the dance-loving professor of the Christian name? The clear light of eternity shining into the soul should settle this question once for all. The heart that is full of the joys of Christ has no relish left for the world's pleasures. With heaven above, hell beneath, and the great white throne in front, how can they who are washed in the blood of the Son of God enter into the gaities of the world?

It is this trifling, this playing at religion and frivole. Hard nately that most of all hurts the cause of Christ. If the 'scult tribe of triflers were to leave the communion of the Church, sry would be mightily relieved and strengthened.

Young disciple, *mind the little things of Christ's law.* All uprightness down to a shoe-latchet; all truth to a word; all purity to a look; all sympathy to a tear; all goodness from a smile up to the vast measure of the Calvary standard; and in everything, aye a trifle, be as true as steel. You are on probation. Beware lest your fair promise be, as is often the innocence of childhood, like a lovely rose, whose leaves fade and drop off one by one, till nothing remains but the naked, unsightly core with a worm in it. Rather may your profession be like a newly-opened well, whose impurities are gradually borne away by the freshly-springing waters, till at length it pours forth a crystal stream.

Standing by a great river, I saw two little birds, as it seemed, rise from the bank and flutter on the breeze. One spread its wings, and although the wind was adverse, it soared high above the river, and crossing over, descended to its nest on the other side. Meanwhile the other, after being tossed hither and thither by the eddying winds, was dashed down upon the stream and borne away. I drew near, and found it was a withered leaf. So heaven-born faith will spread its wings on the very breeze of opposition and soar heavenward; while instability, tossed to and fro, like a driven leaf, upon every wind that blows, is at last dashed down by temptation, and borne away by the strong currents of sin to rise no more.

Let us not overlook the importance of *self-edification.* It is the bane of many churches and the infirmity of many Christians, that they depend wholly for spiritual food on the ministry of others. This is often the burden of pastors as it is the hindrance of the flock. Many never learn to feed themselves: like babes, they need to be fed by others. The office and ordinance of the

ministry can never indeed be dispensed with. So long as men must earn their bread with the sweat of the brow the few must think for the many, and the greater number of Christians will largely depend on their pastors for their spiritual meals. Still by prayer and pains most believers might acquire the faculty of ministering to themselves. This acquisition would lighten the burden of the pastorate, would render the services of the sanctuary doubly precious and profitable, would facilitate progress in wisdom and holiness, and add immensely to Christian usefulness. To teach a young convert how to study the Word of God and grasp its treasures for himself, how to employ in the wider ranges of its power the truly beneficent and gloriously efficacious instrument of secret prayer, both for his own sanctification and for all wise and righteous uses; in short, to teach him to be in a large measure his own minister, bishop, and upbuilder, is to put his feet on the royal road to Christian eminence, and to put upon the Church her brightest adorning. No amount of self-edification can supersede the use of the pastorate; on the other hand, it will surely add to its lustre and efficacy. Happy is that minister of the gospel, and like his Master, who in ministering to members is ministering to ministers. His light is increased an hundredfold because it shines on the burnished face of a hundred reflectors. Having such self-edification in his eye, Jude says, "Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

The attention of young converts cannot be too early called to *Christian work*. The heart that glows in the dawning beams of grace, "a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun," burns with love to the saints, bleeds with sympathy for sinners, and pants with desire to promote the cause of the Saviour. But first zeal needs guiding; the new lamp must be trimmed. Happily in the service of Him who will reward even a cup of

cold water given to a disciple there is work for every one. Hard work, hard enough to tax the man of giant strength. Difficult work, difficult enough to strain the mightiest intellect, and try the most splendid genius. Work, simple and easy, such as a child may do. In the vineyard, he who cannot plant may dig, he who cannot train may water, and he who cannot handle the pruning-knife may carry the tools for another.

Great care, however, must be taken that working is not overdone. Nothing is more hurtful to the soul than unsanctified work. Unless the soul keeps the keen edge of humility and the fear of the Lord, nothing is more productive of formality and spiritual pride than a class in the Sabbath-school, a chief place in the mission, or an office in the Church. When ministerial duty takes the place of fellowship with Christ, when official service becomes a substitute for personal holiness, the pulpit itself may prove to be the road to perdition. On the other hand, when undertaken in love to the Master, and prosecuted in the grace of the Holy Spirit with all lowliness of mind and fervent desire to promote the glory of God, Christian work is a special means of grace. As a rule, they and they only make rapid and marked progress in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus who spend and are spent in Christian work.

Let every young disciple look to the Master in earnest and persevering prayer for direction in this matter. None who pray and long for usefulness ever fail of finding work and success in it. A discerning pastor will assist in finding the right place and work for each willing-hearted one. The minister's Bible-class should be the congregational theological hall, where gifts are discovered and developed, where an enlightened and enthusiastic love of work is fostered, and whence the various classes of workers are sent forth into the several departments of the service of the Church. It may be within the little quiet circle of home, by far the most important field of labour, except the ministry itself. It may be in the Sabbath-school, or the

mission district, the cottage meeting, or the open-air service, the reformatory or the ragged school, the Dorcas society or the penny bank, the visitation of the sick, the poor, the aged, and the lapsed, the kitchen or the drawing-room, the barrack or the forecastle, the infirmary or the jail, or twenty other fields, all of which are white unto the harvest in the days in which we live. The air seems to be full of voices calling us to arise and work. Above all, a voice from the cross and from the throne is borne to every redeemed soul, calling on us to be, to do, to give, to suffer,—in one word, to live Christ as He lived on earth, as He lives in us. The weakest may win a soul. A child may cry, Hosanna! "It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." The Church will never accomplish her mission in the evangelization of the world until all her members find their place and work. When every Christian lays his gift on the altar of consecration, and clothed with zeal as with a cloak, is resolved in the might of the Lord to strike a blow for God and for eternity, the millennium will be at hand.

Out of the awakening in 1859-60 sprang a mighty host of Christian workers. Thousands have recently professed to believe through grace. Much will depend, under God, on the training they receive at the outset. If they advance into the fuller light of the knowledge of Jesus; if they acquire the skill of Christian artificers and craftsmen; if their hands are trained to war and their fingers to fight; if they are not ashamed to bear reproach for the Master, and to follow Him without the camp; and, above all, if they find their chiefest joy within the veil, ever breathing the quickening air of communion on the loftier summits of secret prayer,—then assuredly the present generation will see a great forward movement of true religion in the land; and the sweet genius of Christianity will be found shedding on our country a softer and more hallowed influence than ever before.



CHAPTER XII.

BIBLE READING.

THE constant, prayerful, and enlightened study of the Word of God never fails to impress on Christian character a peculiar stamp. It imparts a high tone of spirituality. It inspires the true courage of opinions. It develops and ennobles individuality of character; it fosters the spirit of a God-fearing independence; and it fills to overflow the springs of Christian usefulness.

As we read the history of the Reformation, or of the Puritans in England, and the Covenanters in Scotland, and trace the footsteps of a faithful Church in the blood of her martyred sons, we are ready to exclaim, "There were giants in those days!" To what did these heroic servants of Jesus Christ, to whom our country and the world are so deeply indebted, owe their mighty faith, their tenacious grasp of truth, their intense love of liberty and spiritual independence, their fearless mien in the presence of their enemies, and their unconquerable spirit in the midst of fire and sword, rack and thumbscrew, bonds and banishment and death? Their undaunted valour, their lofty patriotism, their chivalrous stand for freedom against tremendous odds, their burning abhorrence of error, false worship, and all hypocrisies, and their faithfulness unto death, I hesitate not to assert, were largely due to their profound knowledge of the Word, their loyalty to the mind of the Spirit, and their intense appreciation of the eternal principles of righteousness and truth,

which by the constant and prayerful study of the Scriptures they had been enabled in a masterful way to grasp and to make their own. Like her Divine Head, who in the terrible days of His temptation desired no bread but the Word, and no weapon but the sword of the Spirit, so the Church in her wilderness times has always drunk most deeply at this well, and has found her solace and her strength in unmingled draught from the pure Word of life.

These men of the olden time were no superficial readers of so many chapters of the Bible ; they studied it profoundly, they dived into its depths, they searched out its hidden riches. Nor were they mere intellectual students of the Word, mere knowers of so much revealed truth. They were men of prayer. They sought and depended on the aid of the Holy Ghost. They took pains to pierce the shell of the letter in order to reach and possess the kernel of the full, deep meaning of the Spirit. Nor were they mere mystics, good little pietists, contented to live and move and have their spiritual being in a dim religious twilight of emotional experience. They were practical Christians. Their principles were applied sternly and unflinchingly, all round to every relationship of life, and every sphere of human activity. It is easy for us, no doubt, to spy out their faults, and criticise their failures. But let us of this easy modern time not forget that their beliefs, their motives, their lives, were not like little babbling brooks that pursue the even tenor of their way over smooth and pebbled beds, and amidst quiet rustic scenes, where no voice mingles with the peaceful waters save the songs of the birds that sport and nestle in the over-arching boughs. No ; rather their faithful contendings for that truth and their bold advances against opposing error resemble a mighty stream that rushes down from mountain recesses, battling with great boulders, sweeping through narrow gorges, and with thundering voice and clouds of spray cleaving a course downwards to the quiet level of the fertile plain. As the

peaceful stream owes its very existence to the mountain torrent, so for our free and open Bible we are indebted to the love these noble men of old bore to the Word of truth, and their loyalty to its Divine Author.

The battle is not yet finished. The enemy has only changed front. We need not fear the issue, for the battle is not ours but God's. But it is plain that now even as much as before, on the knowledge of the truth, on the grasp of great principles, on the power of wielding the sword of the Spirit, and on that living not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, which only can give faith and spiritual endurance, must depend the victory. Now, apart from the study of the Scriptures, there is little or no communion with God. Where there is little communion with God, there is little strength in God. A generation of mere sermon-hearers or periodical readers is no better for testimony or work than an army of invalids is for fighting. At best they are but a host of dwarfed, narrow-chested, enfeebled soldiers, who may make a show on parade to vindicate their claim to some small pension of spiritual comfort. But to push forward the great Captain's cause, to beleaguer and capture the fortified places of evil, to win victories for Christ and His kingdom, the Church needs an army made valiant and strong by feeding on the supernatural food.

Bible-reading, in the sense of a patient investigation of the whole mind of the Spirit as made known in Scripture, is only beginning to revive. There were not wanting, indeed, earnest students of the Word in the pulpit, the class-room, and the pew; but until quite a recent period a large proportion of our Christian people were contented to rely wholly on their teachers for the knowledge of Scripture. They borrowed all their lights. Only a few were careful in trimming their own lamps, and obtaining supplies of the heavenly oil direct from the golden bowl. The increasing hurry of business, the enlarged demands of social life, an abundance of a lighter religious literature, a

declining spirituality, all tended to one and the same result—a neglected Bible. A neglected Bible means a neglected God, a neglected soul, a neglected salvation. The ignorance of Scripture, even among the cultured classes, was and still is exceeding great. Many of these could recall to mind on the slightest reference, and describe on the spur of the moment any one character or scene in a fashionable novel; but to name one of the minor prophets, or to dip into the Psalms of David, would be to such utter bewilderment and darkness. I have seen a lady of high accomplishment, who, though brought up within the pale of Christian society, searched for one of the epistles of the New Testament by commencing at the gospels, and turning over the pages in the patient hope of finding it somewhere in the book. And no wonder, when it is borne in mind that the last and most unlikely thing on earth to be found in a drawing-room is the Book of God. And yet such persons would scorn to be regarded as not good Christians.

Had the present movement in Scotland subserved no other end than the effectual recall of our Christian people to the privilege and duty, the importance and the value, of a reverent yet enthusiastic study of the Holy Scriptures, the result is incalculably precious, and will yield a more than golden harvest in years to come. Floods of religious literature, good, bad, and indifferent, have been sweeping away some of the old landmarks of church and family life; and the stream of the pure word of inspiration has been almost merged and lost in the yellow overflow and muddy wash of mere human thought and comment and fancy. Is it a small matter that many thousand earnest spirits, including Christian workers of every class, advanced believers and beginners, should under a mighty impulse, an impulse no less calm than powerful, give themselves as they have never done before to the prayerful and painstaking inquiry, "What saith the Lord?" For the past year the Bible has been read and searched in many quarters an hundredfold more than ever; and

better still, this diligent perusal of the Word has been accompanied with the prayer of the psalmist, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." That this gathering of the heavenly treasure will enrich many,—that this abundant sowing of the good seed of the Word, each man in the field of his own heart, will yield a large and appropriate return,—I cannot but believe. And had the American evangelists rendered no other service to the cause of true religion in our land than this, they deserve to be enshrined in the grateful memory of Scottish Christians. Above all, without decrying the use of a sound and wholesome Christian literature, let us give thanks to the great Master who has thus gently reproved us by putting into our hands anew His own Word, as if He said, "Ye have been going to the broken cisterns: return to the fountain of living waters."

Some years ago Mr. Moody, it appears, with a view to a more exact and thorough knowledge of the contents of the Bible, set himself to its careful and systematic investigation. Not contented with reading it consecutively, chapter by chapter, book by book, he fell upon the method of taking a topic or doctrine, and running through the whole Bible with it, seeking fresh light, proof, and illustration, in every utterance of the Holy Spirit on the subject in hand. In a little fellowship-meeting he propounded and illustrated his method with good effect. A Chicago minister who was present at one of those meetings, struck with the freshness and power of the earnest lay-missionary's Bible-reading, invited him to his church for the purpose of illustrating his method on a more extensive scale. The invitation was accepted; the reading was given. The effect was marked. To the homely, unpretending expositor himself it was the discovery of a hidden talent; and he was by no means slow to bring it forth for use. From that day his Bible-readings became a power for good.

This method of exposition is not new to us. It has been in

use in Scotland more or less in Bible-classes; and Christians have been accustomed to employ it for their own private benefit. It has not been much used, however, in the pulpit, although it might with advantage be introduced there with more or less frequency. The chief methods of pulpit-teaching among us are the sermon and lecture. The sermon or popular discourse is hortatory rather than didactic; the lecture is didactic rather than hortatory. The sermon is characterized by intensity rather than breadth; the lecture by breadth rather than intensity. The strength of the former lies in making impression; the strength of the latter in giving light. Too much sermonizing tends to narrowness; too much lecturing to deadness.

The method practised so successfully by the American evangelist differs from both, being neither sermon nor lecture. It combines to some extent the distinctive features of both, embracing as it does the topical and the extensive reading. Unlike the sermon, it is not confined to one text; and it differs from the lecture in that it runs through the whole Word, dipping only where its own subject emerges or lies concealed. It may be handled with the same intensity, impressiveness, and personal directness as the popular discourse, whilst it ought to possess not a little of the lucidity, doctrinal demonstration, and satisfying of the judgment, that characterize the lecture. It is a simple and easy method; the merest tyro with a concordance in hand can practise it, at least for his own use. It is instructive and edifying, furnishing the Bible student at once with large knowledge of the contents of Scripture, systematized views of truth, and abundant confirmation of sound doctrine. It supplies relief from the monotony of constantly reading the Bible straight through, as though it were a mere narrative, or all its parts were of equal value. It enlists curiosity, that most powerful of motives in the pursuit of knowledge. Each time the wise and prayerful student runs through the Scriptures in search of a text, or truth, or illustrative fact, he comes back convinced that

there is more, and still more, to be discovered. Luther said of the Bible that it was a garden in which there were few trees he had not shaken for an apple. Let us add, there are few trees in that garden which may not be successfully shaken for apples an hundred times twice told. Let us "*search the Scriptures.*"

Moody's Bible-readings illustrated in a striking manner the sheer force of truth, the mighty power of the Word of God. From these we saw many persons of the more intelligent class come away, some instructed and stimulated, some struck and stunned, some relieved and comforted, all acknowledging the power of the truth. True, apart from the Holy Spirit the Word is but a sword without the living arm to wield it. But how often is that keen blade wrapped in a sheath of human wisdom, so that the Holy Spirit cannot use it for His own ends! If the entire body of believers were to set themselves each one to make the full use of the Word and the promised teacher, the Holy Ghost, we should see a revival that would revolutionize the Church and regenerate the world.

The Word of God is milk for the babe, strong meat for the strong man, water for the thirsty, wine for the fainting, manna for the wilderness, honey for the feast, and the imperishable bread for an imperishable life. It is a sword which even a child can wield with power, a hammer with which the weakling can break the rocks in pieces. It is the key of wisdom, the pilgrim's staff, the poor man's treasure, the companion of the lonely, the counsellor of the perplexed, the needle always true to heaven, the fire at which to warm away every soul-chill, and the lamp that throws light on every dark place, visible or invisible, the near or the remote, revealing at once the next step and the distant heavenly home. As the instrument of personal sanctification and Christian service, without which there can be no growth in grace, no effective testimony for Christ, no real work for God, the prayerful study of the Scriptures cannot be overvalued. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them."



CHAPTER XIII.

CHRISTIAN GROWTH.

IF the revival of religion meant no more, and yielded no other fruit than lifting up to higher grace and holiness one Christian in every ten, the result were of incalculable value for both worlds. To raise the strugglers and the stragglers among the saints to loftier heights of communion with God, to more faith, purity, truth, and goodness, is a work second only to conversion in its grandeur and importance; it is indeed, like regeneration, the work of the Holy Ghost. But in the one case as in the other, He employs instrumentalities and means. And in this lifting up to higher faith and hope and love, so precious are the benefits to the promoted believer, so fruitful of blessing to others, and so pregnant with results for eternity, that the earnest pastor may well bend all his energies to the task. So important is the work of furthering believers in grace, that ministers may well toil and struggle, and watch and pray, until sometimes the brain reels, the eye grows dim, the heart palpitates with fearful speed, the once steady hand trembles, and the footstep prematurely loses its firmness, in their laborious endeavours to effect this great end. If the people only knew the secret sweat of the faithful pastor's brain, the agonizing prayers, the groans no ear hears but the Master's, the tears no eye sees but God's, and the long, weary watching for the signs of the believer's growth in grace, they would not much marvel at our

joy when, as in the time of revival, the consummation is reached on an extended scale.

The phrase "*The higher Christian life*," much in use of late, is misleading. The Scriptures do not teach that there are two and only two distinct planes of life in Christ, a lower and a higher; nor does experience bear out that theory. What the Scriptures do teach, and experience attests, is *higher* Christian life, higher and still higher, and always higher; for "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Between the lowest and the highest there are endless degrees; between the thirtyfold and the hundredfold there is not only the specified sixty, but also a great many varying figures.

There is some danger of laying too much stress on mere sweetness of feeling, as if higher Christian life consisted mainly or in great measure in peace and happiness. Joy is not the whole of Christian blessedness; it is not even a chief element in it. Our Lord does not so much as mention it in the Beatitudes. The disciple of Jesus is blessed in his poverty of spirit, in his godly sorrow, in his meekness of disposition, in his hunger and thirst after righteousness, in his mercifulness, in his purity of heart, in his peace-making, and in his persecutions. The only joy mentioned here is the joy arising out of tribulation and suffering for righteousness' sake.

Joy in the Lord is good; but it does not follow that he who has most of this joy is holiest; on the other hand, the disciple, like the Master, may reach the loftiest summits of holy obedience and acceptable service when he is most depressed, and burdened, and broken. Happy frames are good, but holy practice is better, as the ripened grain is better than the green blade. The bleeding heart of love is more excellent than the bounding heart of joy. Charity's cup of cold water will be rewarded when Joy's goblet of ecstasy will pass unnoticed.

Peace, joy, all consolation of grace, is much to be prized, both

for its own sake and as a motive-power in living holily; but there is always a danger of attaching too much importance to the emotion and too little to the practice. Even Pentecostal grace was abused; and when justification by faith alone was becoming a matter of mere antinomian sentimentalism, James, blunt, stern, and downright, stood forward, and with keen, incisive thrusts ripped up the foul sores of an unpractical faith. John Owen has somewhere said he had noticed two classes of professing Christians, one who, though they leaned to legalism, were careful in practice and consistent in life, while the other class, giving more place to grace and the gospel, were of a freer spirit, but less strict in keeping the commandments of God. The undue exalting of emotion in religious experience is an old snare, and has always tended to evil, to mere sensationalism. Spiritual sentimentalism in every form or degree, from the gentlest mysticism to the fiercest fanaticism, while it may assume the appearance of depth, is in reality the shallowest kind of religious experience.

The full development of a gracious and holy character is, as a rule, gradual, slow, and toilsome. Such it is of necessity; for the laws impressed upon the constitution of man, and the laws of the kingdom of God, equally demand it. Such too is the fact, and no theorisings can, in the present state of things, make the way to heaven a triumphal march, or transform the wilderness of cross-bearing into a paradise. Tribulation and conflict remain; and tribulation will be tribulation, and conflict will be conflict, as long as the world lasts. The wisest and holiest men of every age with one voice confess that notwithstanding their frequent painful experience of the thorns and briers of the wilderness their progress was slow. Even when the rod of discipline added its weight to the teachings of the Word and Spirit, the advance in spirituality of mind, holiness of affection, and in full-rounded likeness to the Son of God, has been by steps as tardy as the oak's growth, and as imperceptible and silent as the

shadow on the dial-plate. He who imagines he has reached the limit of personal holiness by a stride, has mistaken the mole-hills for the mountains. If any man thinks he has mounted to the noontide of perfect knowledge and grace by a single bound of faith, he fondly fancies the horizon is the meridian.

It is true, however, that there are seasons when Christians make progress in rapid strides. There are sunny days when the corn ripens more in one hour than at other times in twenty-four. And yet the hastened process of the hour could not have taken place without the previous slow and struggling growth. As in conversion a previous training of long duration, a protracted struggle with unbelief or other sin, is frequently utilized by the Holy Spirit, furnishing as it does a broader basis of gracious character and larger material for use in sanctification and service, so too the believer's conflict and toil through weary and seemingly unprofitable years may suddenly ripen into mellowest fruit, the hastened result being due not more to the superabounding grace of the present hour than to the grace that sustained the soul in its preceding struggles.

Like sheep-walks running at various altitudes in parallel lines along a hill side, there are numerous planes of grace and holiness, rising one above another, by which Christian pilgrims pursue their heavenward journey. Furthest down, and near the mountain foot, where unwholesome vapours rising from the marshes cloud the vision and clog the energies of the traveller, and where the reedy swamp conceals the ambushed snake, the path is more tiresome, cheerless, and unsafe. Higher up footing is firmer, the sky is clearer, the air is more bracing, the prospect is more extensive, and journeying more secure. Higher and higher still is path on path, the eye itself being scarcely able to scan the utmost heights. Far up in the crisp air beneath the calm azure, by a pathway of rock, amidst rugged peaks not less familiar with the grandeur of storms than the purest light of the sun, and in full prospect of the celestial city whose pinnacles

tower above the everlasting hills, whose gates and walls are bright with unclouded day, a brave, resolute, though little and select company of the ransomed people make their way Zionward with "songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." Some reach the higher elevation of faith more easily and quickly than others. But many, probably most, believers find that ere the spell of the world's enchantments is utterly broken; ere its cares, ambitions, joys, and attachments dwindle into their proper insignificance; ere its honours become as tinsel and its friendships as faded flowers,—they have had to pass through many a sore and protracted struggle. How much may be due in the case of those who are highest in grace to the believer's faithfulness in following his Lord, and how much to the absolute sovereignty of the God of all grace, it is not possible to determine. But one thing is certain, he who is highest and holiest must still encounter the adversary; must still wrestle with those "principalities and powers," who seem to contest every inch of the road between earth and heaven, and who oppose not the least, but perhaps the most, those who have advanced the furthest and have obtained the most signal successes over them. Such too is the vitality, subtlety, and strength of sin even in its roots and possibilities in the heart and life of a saint, that no Christian, unless he is drunk with religious feeling or spell-bound by the world's enchantments, can consciously carry about with him the seeds and potency of all evil, even devilish sin, and not know inward sorrow and trouble. He who has most light sees furthest into the depths of the heart, sees most of the infinite possibilities of the evil there. The growing light of the morning not only shows the traveller how better to direct his steps, but also reveals specks of mud on his garments, which in the dim dawn he could not perceive. The advanced Christian has ten times more sorrow for one little sin than the beginner has for ten sins,—each, it may be, tenfold more grievous and hateful. But some in our day who regard themselves as advanced and

perfect, instead of keeping the eye of a cautious fear on the abyss of remaining sin in the heart, seem to be sporting on the brink of it.

The fruits and evidences of grace in the soul may be summed up in two things : to the true believer *sin is bitter and Christ is sweet*. In other words, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. In all subsequent advances made by the believer, the whole amount of his progress may still be reckoned thus : *sin is more bitter and Christ is more sweet*.

A growing knowledge of sin and sense of its evil invariably mark the progress of the saint. Jonathan Edwards tells us that he had a vastly greater sense of his own wickedness and the badness of his heart after his conversion than ever he had before it. "My wickedness," he says, "as I am in myself, has long appeared to me to be perfectly ineffable, and swallowing up all thoughts and imaginations, like an infinite deluge or mountains over my head. I know not how to express better what my sins appear to me to be, than by heaping infinite upon infinite, and multiplying infinite by infinite. Very often, for these many years, these expressions are in my mind, and in my mouth, 'Infinite upon infinite! infinite upon infinite!' When I look into my heart and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss, infinitely deeper than hell. And it appears to me, that were it not for grace, free, exalted, and raised up to the infinite height of all the fulness and the glory of the great Jehovah, and the arm of His power and grace stretched forth in all the majesty of His power and in all the glory of His sovereignty, I should appear sunk down in my sins below hell itself, far beyond the sight of everything but the eye of sovereign grace, that can pierce down to such a depth. And yet it seems to me that my conviction of sin is exceedingly small and faint; it is enough to amaze me that I have no more sense of sin. I know certainly that I have very little sense of

my sinfulness. When I have had turns of weeping and crying for my sins, I thought I knew at the time that my repentance was nothing to my sin."

Men talk of victory over sin. He who has a sense of sin, and such an attitude in regard to it, such a knowledge of his own heart and of God, and such a view of the divine mercy in Christ, as Edwards here describes, has achieved as great a victory over it as is possible in the body. Nor is the victory less real or less complete in that the believer carries with him a constant sense of his sinfulness, and a remembrance of the old sins from which he has been purged. For while there is an unholy remembrance and sense of sin, which every sinner knows, there is a hallowed memory and sense of it which one shall carry about as he would one of the nails that pierced the Lord of Glory and fixed Him fatally to the cross.

But with a growing knowledge of sin there is a growing knowledge of Christ. To many of late we cannot doubt He has become more precious. Many have come out of the deep shadows amidst which they had been walking; they have reached the sunnier side of the hill. Joy in the Holy Ghost, and much assurance of God's love, have recently filled the cup of many a Christian to overflow. A simpler faith in Christ; a more constant sense of the peace that passeth all understanding; a more habitual and incessant recurrence in the believing thoughts of the heart to the blood of Jesus; a more unbroken current of secret prayer; an increase of power to resist and overcome sin; a steadier undertone of calmness in the Lord in work, in conflict, and in suffering; and a growing delight in doing good to all men, especially the household of faith,—are some of the fruits and signs of Christian growth. Such results we trust the recent revival has yielded in the experience and life of Christians not a few. We cannot doubt that there is more joy in Christ, more faith and love, more fellowship with Him and greater strength to serve Him, a firmer stand and a clearer

testimony, with a bolder front to the world, and a spirit of greater compassion and tenderness towards perishing sinners. Still the word of command is, "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward."

To show that feeble Christians have been remarkably strengthened, that others have had the stumbling-blocks that hindered them for years removed out of their way, while not a few have been lifted up from doubt and fear to joy and full assurance, two or three instances may be given.

WHAT HINDERS?

A servant girl, possessed of much more than the average intelligence of her class, came in one evening much troubled about her state. The following conversation took place:

"Are you a Christian?"

"I trust I am, sir."

"How were you converted?"

"One day at work I began to think about my soul, and was led to seek the Saviour."

"Were you never anxious before that day?"

"Many a time I had anxious thoughts before that; but by driving on in my work I always managed to knock the unwelcome thoughts out of my head."

"But this time the thoughts would not go?"

"No. I tried hard to quash my fears, but was forced at last to go aside and pray and read. After a time I found Jesus without anybody helping me. I knew from a child the plan of salvation, and I continued praying for the Holy Spirit until I found Christ and a change came over me."

"What then?"

"I had great joy in the Lord, and thought I never could love His people enough. I gave up everything I knew to be wrong, and was very happy in doing the will of Christ."

"What is the matter now?"

"I really don't know, sir. But I am not getting on at all. My joy is gone. Indeed, I can scarcely say that I have peace now at all. Do what I will my soul does not prosper, and I cannot find out the reason why it is so. In these days others are getting much blessing. I can see they are very happy in their souls. But it is so different with me that I do not know what to think."

"Are you neglecting secret prayer?"

"No. I am praying as much as ever I did, although I find it hard; for there seems to be so little good to me in my praying."

"Do you read the Word?"

"Every day."

"Do you neglect the ordinances and means of grace?"

"No; I can confidently say I do not neglect any means."

"What about your company?"

"I have no dealings with the world. I could wish to spend all my time with the people of God."

"Are you careful in regard to everything that wounds the conscience?"

"I am. Since my conversion I have had a great dread of sin. I do not know of any cherished sin. I have searched myself again and again and prayed about it, and I strive to watch against the beginnings of sin, and to keep from even the appearance of evil."

"Any neglected duty?"

"I do not know of any."

"Then you must be a very strict, good woman?"

"Oh, no, no, sir. I know I am a miserable sinner, and need to come to the blood of Jesus many times in a day."

"Then you don't know what to do?"

"Indeed, I do not; I am perfectly at my wits' end."

"What sort of people are in the house?"

"The family are respectable people of the world."

"Do they interfere in the matter of your religion?"

"No, not at all. We get our turn out to church, and they never mind any of us in regard to religion."

"Then there are other servants?"

"Yes; other six."

"What sort of persons are they?"

"Quite careless about their souls."

"Of course, you have spoken to them of Christ?"

"No, sir."

"What! Have you never told them what the Lord has done for you, and tried to win them for the Saviour?"

"Never."

"Would they see nothing different in you from themselves?"

"They might. I have several times rebuked them for profane swearing and levity."

But you never once spoke to them of the love of God, or their need of salvation! Why?"

"I was afraid I might afterwards fall back, and bring discredit on the cause of Christ. I thought it better not to make any confession in that way until I should be strong enough to maintain my ground, and not backslide."

"That is to say, you are to confess Christ in your own strength, and not in His. Do you not know that the Lord Jesus is our strength as well as our righteousness? We are to be strong, not in the grace that is in ourselves, but 'in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.' We are to be 'strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.' In His strength we are to confess Him. 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.' If you will not confess Christ until you are strong enough *in yourself* for that duty, you will never confess Him; for by not confessing you will grow weaker and weaker. You are thus adopting the most certain means of backsliding. If you are unfaithful, you must fall away."

"I did not think of that at all."

"More than that; all this time you have really been denying the Lord. You have distrusted His ability and willingness to uphold you in making an open confession of Him. You have put your candle under a bushel, and no wonder it is going out. You have been ashamed of Him in the presence of His enemies. You have been disobedient to His word, and so far you have not taken up your cross. You have been unfaithful to God, and to the souls of your fellow-servants. You have been presumptuous in expecting that you should live for some time, and that a more convenient season should arrive. If any of these girls had died suddenly in their sins, what a terrible responsibility would have lain at your door! The blood of a lost soul might have been charged on you. What do you think?"

"Oh, sir, I see it all now. That has been my hindrance and my sin."

These words were accompanied with signs of deep emotion. After a pause, she signified her earnest desire to begin and confess Jesus in every way commanded by Him, believing that He who had redeemed her by His blood would keep her from falling, and that in standing up for Him His grace would be sufficient for her. This new light proved to be like a new conversion to her; for she seemed to rise into a higher sphere of faith, comfort, and consecration to the Lord.

THE "UNSUCCESSFUL CHRISTIAN."

Here is another instance, the case of one who describes himself as "an unsuccessful Christian." This man, an office-bearer in a Dundee church, was led to much searching of heart on account of his spiritual leanness and want of success in the work of Christ. The awakening here and throughout the country caused him no small anxiety, and gave rise to bitter self-reflections. Everywhere Christians were moving onward; why was he at a standstill? He trusted he was a Christian; but where was the

Christian's liberty, joy, and heavenward progress? He was a worker in the vineyard of the Lord, and held office in the church; but where were the fruits of his labours, where the signs of blessing? The evangelistic movement, which had yielded so much benefit to others, brought him no good. He was pained to mark the growing contrast between his own barrenness and the fruitfulness of others. In this frame of mind, he one Sabbath stepped into a church where he was a stranger. In the course of the sermon, the preacher touched on a point which seemed like hitting the nail on the head. "Some of you Christians bewail your leanness; you have no blessing in your own souls, and you are unprofitable to others. Why is it so? I will tell you. You are not making large use of the grace that is in Christ; you come seldom to Him, and when you do come, it is with so little expectation of blessing that you carry little away. You have not, because you ask not. How can you prosper if you neglect secret communion with God, and restrain prayer?" At this point the "unsuccessful Christian" felt the sharp point of the lance piercing his sore. "That is the very thing that has hindered me," he said to himself; "surely my sin has found me out." The preacher proceeded to offer counsel. "Henceforth," said he, "set apart a fixed portion of your time for secret communion with God. But this, you will say, is the great difficulty with you. The work of the world hurries and exhausts you. Scarcely can you find even a few minutes day by day for entire seclusion; and often when leisure is left you the physical and mental strength necessary for a profitable drawing near to God is clean gone. And what are you to do? Well then, surely you can secure one hour every Lord's-day. Let that hour be spent alone with God; and if it be rightly employed, you will not fail of obtaining much blessing for yourselves and for others."

It was a word in season. The "unsuccessful Christian" felt that had the words been spoken by an angel from heaven com-

missioned for the purpose of dealing with him, he could scarcely have been more deeply convinced of the appropriateness of these counsels to his case. He marvelled greatly he had not sooner discovered the cause of his failure. He set apart an hour on Sabbath mornings for special and deliberate intercourse with the Eternal. On the first morning his strength was exhausted in half an hour, and he desisted, feeling, however, refreshed in spirit. On the second Sabbath morning he was enabled to persevere for three-quarters of an hour, and left off, wearied yet revived. On the third morning he spent the whole hour with God, in such calm, fervent, blessed communings as the heart never forgets. In this way he went on week after week, until the hour had grown unwittingly to an hour and a half, all too short, he now felt, for the momentous business he had to transact with high heaven. He stopped henceforth at the hour and a half, for family and public duties imposed that limit. What has been the result? He has entered on a new phase of spiritual life. A more penetrating sense of his own unworthiness; an enlarged view of the riches of divine grace; a vivid realization of the efficacy of the Saviour's atoning blood; the felt realness, power, and sweetness of face to face communion with God through the Spirit,—have taken possession of his heart. He has been lifted up, but he is pressing higher still. Nor is that all. Since he began thus fervently to labour in prayer, as of old Epaphras, the friend of Paul, laboured, one of his own sons has been converted, and two boys in his class have also been added to the Lord. He believes he has through God accomplished more in a few months than during the previous years of his Christian life. The "unsuccessful Christian" has thus become the happy believer and successful worker.

Many stop in prayer at the point where it becomes a "labour." Precisely at that point it is where efficacious prayer for the most part begins. In true prayer, which is the highest kind of all human labour, there is a gradation of effort, with a correspond-

ing gradation of success or blessing. This gradation is set forth in the words of our Lord, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." The first step in this gradation of successful prayer is *faith*, which asking always implies. The second step is *perseverance*, which is the great thing in seeking. The third and highest step in this celestial ladder is *importunity*, the holy violence of loud-sounding and repeated blows at mercy's gate. The first degree of power in prayer is simply *faith*; the second is *faith persevering*; the third is *faith persevering and importunate*. All the children of God are taught by the Spirit to pray in faith. Only some believers add perseverance to their faith, like David, or Daniel, or the first Christians in their ten days of prayer and waiting for the Holy Spirit. Fewer still attain to importunity, which is the sublimest effort of prayer, as Jacob in that mysterious night of wrestling; or Moses, when in an agony of intercession he signified his willingness to be blotted out rather than be denied; or the Syrophenician woman, the greatness of whose faith lay in her persistent and invincible importunity. For lack of perseverance in prayer the great majority of believers come short of the higher measures of grace and holiness. For the same reason most Christian workers achieve only the more limited results. Only a few saints have the giant faith and energy to ascend to the highest pinnacle of power in prayer, and realize the truth of Christ's words, "All things are possible to him that believeth."

THE SHIP CAPTAIN'S STORY.

Last year a seafaring man, who had been in command of a large vessel hailing from Dundee, had lost his situation through one of those mishaps that sometimes overtake even an honest man. His sense of honour was wounded in the very core; his prospects were utterly blighted; poverty stared his family in

the face ; he felt he was a ruined man. Every effort to recover his position, or find some means of winning bread, was baffled : and although a Christian, his faith was too weak to rise above the billows of misfortune ; he lost his confidence in God, and his heart sank within him. One day, despondent, and not knowing what to turn his hand to, he went into the daily prayer-meeting. The hymn, "The Lord will Provide," was just beginning to be sung. The very first verse—

"In some way or other the Lord will provide :
It may not be *my* way,
It may not be *thy* way,
And yet in *His own* way
The Lord will provide,"

fell with soothing, healing power on his heart. The second verse—

"At some time or other the Lord will provide :
It may not be *my* time,
It may not be *thy* time,
And yet in *His own* time
The Lord will provide,"

seemed so reasonable and so scriptural, that his spirit at once rose on the wing of renewed faith above the mists of doubt and fear. In the third stanza—

"Despond then no longer—the Lord will provide :
And this be the token—
No word He has spoken
Was ever yet broken ;
The Lord will provide :"

he joined with all his heart ; for he was filled with hope and joy, resting confidently in Jehovah-Jireh. On leaving the warm atmosphere of the meeting, the chill air of the world outside, as he paced the street alone, put his new-found hope and comfort to the test. But the pavement seemed not more firm to his feet than the Word of God to his faith. Somehow the burden was gone, and he felt he could not, if he tried, take it

on again. Passing along Reform Street and High Street, he went down to Dock Street, repeating to himself as he went the words of the hymn, "It may not be my way, and yet in His own way; it may not be my time, and yet in His own time, the Lord will provide," and all the while praising God. As he went along Dock Street his eye chanced to light on a group of four or five gentlemen standing at an office door. One of them beckoned to him, and when he went up to them they said, "You are the very man we want. We have just been talking about you, and have resolved to offer you the command of the ship —. We give you three days to decide." The offer was accepted. Thus the Lord did provide; and it was in His own way, and at His own time. Since that day this God-fearing sailor has walked in a sweeter sense of the presence and love of Christ than ever he enjoyed before, the trial and deliverance having through grace lifted him to a higher region of Christian experience.

THE SABBATH-SCHOOL TEACHER.

A well-educated young man, engaged in mercantile pursuits, and held in much esteem by a wide circle of friends and fellow-workers in Sabbath-school and other Christian work, makes the following statement. Converted five years ago, he was enabled to separate himself from the worldly companions and associations by which he had been entangled, and to become identified with the spiritually-minded disciples of Jesus in worship and in work, and in the closest fellowship. Painfully conscious of his weakness and his constant need of grace, fearful lest the world should again throw its potent and deadly spell around him, he clung to the cross, and laboured hard to look to Jesus as the author and finisher of his faith. He now walked in another world; grace had made him a new man; his faith and hope were set on God; he trembled at the thought of returning to sin and foolishness; and he enjoyed a measure of comfort in

communion with God, in intercourse with Christian companions, and in putting forth efforts to win souls, which he felt he would not barter for a world. He had endeavoured at the outset to count the cost, and he was not surprised to find himself in sore travail of soul, and perpetual conflict with evil. Nor was he unwilling, in the faith of the grace that is in Christ, to persevere for a lifetime in mortal strife with the devil, the world, and the flesh, in the hope of one day entering into everlasting rest.

All this while, however, he was scarcely ever conscious of victory over his enemies. The battle was always going against him; he was making no progress; it was only by incessant and oftentimes terrible struggles that he was enabled to hold his own; and he enjoyed no peace of mind and no sense of safety, except when actually engaged in religious exercises, and frequently not even then. In this course he continued nearly five years, "faint yet pursuing," but sometimes so utterly foiled and broken as to be weary of life. One day last year, when apart and reading for solace to his weary spirit, he fell upon a sentiment of frequent occurrence in evangelical writings, to the effect that the blood of Christ gives victory over sin, not only cleansing from guilt, but imparting such life and power that sin shall no longer have dominion over the believer. Similar expositions of the truth he had read or heard again and again; but this flashed on his mind like fresh light from heaven. He had never so seen it before. He had been seeking dominion over sin by spiritual exercises, but victory fled from him. So long as his mind was occupied in meditation and prayer, and conscious resistance of temptation, hope sustained him, and struggling rays of consolation lightened the battle somewhat, and relieved the storm; but there was no permanent satisfaction, no settled repose. Now he saw clearly he had been labouring to be strong in the grace given him, not in "the grace that is in Christ;" he had sought victory in the strength of his love to Christ, not in the strength of

Christ's love to him. He now saw that by constant faith in the blood that cleanseth from all sin he could have constant peace with God, and in constant peace with God constant power in God, and in constant power in God constant victory over sin. From that moment he entered in some measure into the understanding of the apostle's saying, "More than conquerors through Him that loved us." The conflict did not cease; but the joyful sense of victory in the conflict now began. It was plain he had been striving to build his soul's rest partly on Christ and partly on religious exercises and spirit-penances, adding some hay and stubble of his own to the rock-foundation of the Son of God. Now that he entered on a fuller measure of the liberty of the children of God, there was not less prayer, less watchfulness, less sense of the terrible hideousness of sin, less consciousness of personal unworthiness and weakness and need, less of the broken heart, and less of the stern, uncompromising battle for his Lord. Nay, there was more of all these: only the fuller light, widening the range of vision and the sphere of action, revealed also in greater distinctness the position of strength, the standing of the Captain of our salvation; for to stand in Him and with Him is to possess infinite advantage, and to enjoy perpetual victory. This young man does not imagine that he has attained to perfection. Not less than before does he in his heart realize the bitter cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" But he can add now with a fuller sense of its meaning, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In conversation, a minister of middle age stated in substance what here follows. He had laboured in the gospel for a good many years, he had studied his sermons thoroughly, he had gone into the pulpit with a desire to do his people good, but for the most part he felt as if he was talking to somebody at a great distance, and all but out of hearing. When the revival began in his neighbourhood, he threw himself heartily into the move-

ment; for although he did not at the first conceive the thought, much less the desire, of receiving personal spiritual benefit by it, or any fresh light as to the work of the ministry, he had some vague hopes that he might fall upon improved methods, and that in any case the people might get a blessing. He had not been long in the work when he became conscious of quickening and comfort in his own heart, such as he had not anticipated. Spiritual things became luminous, and near and interesting. He began to be absorbed, and even delighted, in those matters of faith and hope that formerly seemed shadowy and phantom-like; for although he thought he believed in them, they had possessed to his feelings little of certainty or reality. This improved state of mind was due especially to coming in contact with anxious inquirers. Although scarcely knowing how it was, he felt he was being borne by a favouring gale into some warmer clime.

In particular, the effect upon his studies and preaching was marked. He felt that whilst he was as eager as before to do full justice to the solemn duty of preparation for the pulpit, somehow he could study more easily, and, what was new to him, he had the impression that God was really helping him in this part of the work. When he went into the pulpit, he was so much assisted in spirit that he was enabled to throw aside his manuscript and preach extemporaneously. His audience was more attentive, and even the little select knot of educated or intellectual people expressed their decided conviction that the preaching was at once more interesting, more edifying, and more telling. He now felt that his people were within hearing, and it seemed as if he got back an answer from the congregation every time he preached; and there was a positive, though perhaps undefinable, sense of having handled with some power the consciences of all. Better still, men were wakening up to listen as they had never listened, proof of which appeared in the earnest inquiry of not a few who formerly were as dead as the pews they sat in. One result, especially, was the influence for good he had in this way acquired

over the minds of the young men and women ; this he felt was of such importance that he could not sufficiently thank God for it. In short, if the revival had effected nothing more for him and his work than this, he maintained it was one of the choicest blessings a minister of the gospel could receive.

It would be difficult to estimate too highly the blessing, with its ultimate outcome, that has been received by ministers of the gospel during the recent movement. Some have had the courage manfully yet modestly to tell their congregations that the revival has brought them new light. Very striking in some instances has been the effect of this announcement. It has awakened the people to listen to their pastor's message as they had never listened before. And need there be any wonder if, when a congregation beholds the face of their minister lit up with something of the radiance that transfigured the countenance of the man of God (Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30), they should begin to press towards the heights where their leader is seen to stand, beckoning them upward and cheering them on ?

"More light ! more light !" is still the wise-hearted minister's cry. As the ploughman must yoke his horses in the chill mornings of early spring long before even the grey dawn, and as he must in the late weeks of autumn prolong his labours even when the twilight is gone, and the evening star is trembling in the sky, so many a pastor works with comparatively little light, sometimes indeed for a season amidst deepening shadows. And shall not he who was thankful for the twinkling starlight of hope hail the fuller radiance of the Spirit's gracious work in his own heart, and in the hearts of his people, when in the high noon of revival the Sun of righteousness is chasing away the cheerless shadows of doubt and fear from a multitude of souls ?

More light to a minister means more light to a thousand others who are struggling, it may be, far down in the valley. When a minister trims his lamp, a whole host trim theirs also. Grace makes the humblest gift bright ; for even the dust sparkles

when the sun shines on it. More grace multiplies the preacher's one talent to two, and the two to five. When the inner chamber of the minister's heart is swept clean of every cobweb of earthly care, of cankered envy, of vainglorious aims, of trivial pursuit, and carnal pleasure, the light of God will shine full and clear in him; and his every word and work will be like a burnished mirror, reflecting his own faith and hope and joy on all around. Many pastors have been of late rejoicing with the joy of harvest. The reaping of last year will make them more skilful to sow and reap again. Abounding prayer, and hope, and holy gladness, make good and successful ministers. The recent sunshine will yet be seen in the golden harvests of coming years.

"What is the great lesson we ministers should learn from this remarkable movement?" said one minister to another lately.

"One great lesson," was the answer, "is, that we should preach with more heart."

"You don't mean to say," rejoined the first, "that there has been any lack of the *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum* in our preaching?"

"No," said the other, "there is a good deal of that in our preaching still, despite that stale, feeble, wearisome method of reading sermons which, in its inevitable tendency to moderatism, is fast transforming the pulpit into something like a rotten stump in the midst of a stagnant pool. But the *perfervidum ingenium* has been too largely expended on the sermon, on the theology, the logic, the mere performance itself. Far too little of this burning spirit has been consumed in pure sympathy with the perishing souls whom we have been *lecturing* or *disquisitioning* rather than trying to save. More heart, more soul, more tenderness, is what we need in our preaching. Not less head, but more heart. Not less method, but less routine. Not less machinery, but less trust in it. Not less breadth, but more point. Less pleasing of men, and yet more love to men. Drawing the

line straight and clear between the saved and lost, but always pointing to the open door for all. Not less divinity, but more humanity in our divinity. Not less the minister or the theologian, but more the sinner speaking to sinners. We want to come down and preach beside the cross, in love dying with Christ all the time we are preaching a dying Christ. Washing our very speech in His blood, we shall preach in its power. If we would preach with heart-breaking power, we must speak with heart-broken tenderness. The true minister of Christ is in the closet a worm, in the study a scholar, in the pulpit an ambassador, in the world a saint, in conflict a hero, in tribulation a martyr; with the voice of a lion, the heart of a lamb, and the hand of a brother, he is a man everywhere."



CHAPTER XIV.

AMONG THE YOUNG MEN.

A WORK of grace culminates in power, although perhaps not in extent, when it gathers in its embrace the young men. From fifteen to thirty the pulse of natural life beats most vigorously. The eye has then the keenest perception of earthly beauty; the ear is most sensitive to the seductive voices of mirth; the imagination is most easily entranced by the world's garish charms; the feelings are tremulously tender, impressible, and sensuous; and the whole nature is most susceptible of all that is called pleasure; while the interests of religion lie buried beneath a thick fog far down in the valley of age, and eternity seems almost too remote to be real. There is no higher summit for the gospel to climb than those pinnacles where youth, bold, giddy, and reckless, is standing. The triumphs of the cross are complete when those proud hearts and strong wills and souls, impassioned with the outbursting energies of first manhood, are bowed in meek and loving surrender at the feet of Christ.

During the last two years our country has seen an immense host of her youthful sons advance to the temple of God, and deliberately and feelingly lay upon the altar of consecration their mind, their heart, their strength, their all. History does not tell us of any previous two years when a movement of greater magnitude has occurred among the youth of our land.

The leading facts and more striking features of the work among the young men may be stated in a few words.

And first, the fact is undeniable that in the course of this movement a very large number of young men, certainly not fewer than several thousands in all, have professed to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Secondly, it is equally a matter of observation that these young men belong to the various social grades—the rich, the middle, and working classes, and that they present every variety of disposition and temperament, from the most amiable and thoughtful to the most passionate and reckless; every degree of education or culture, from the university-bred man to the youth incapable of signing his name; every form of ecclesiastical connexion, and of no religious belief whatever; and every shade of moral character, from the young man of the purest reputation to the prodigal and the profligate.

A third fact, equally significant, is, that amidst the numerous diversities and incongruous circumstances just noted, there is large, substantial unity in the faith newly professed by these young men. They all profess to believe in the Bible, and in the God of the Bible. They all profess to believe in Christ, as the only Saviour from sin. They all say they have arrived at this faith through the Holy Spirit, and not through any power or goodness of their own. They unanimously agree in testifying to grace and salvation as a present blessed reality. And they are of one accord in openly and deliberately renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh.

Another point claiming attention is the circumstance that in the greater number of instances, up to the time of their conversion, there was no likelihood, looking at the matter from a human stand-point, of that great change taking place in them. Many of them were engrossed in business; others were immersed in pleasure; some were strongly pronounced against religion; not a few had long resisted the Spirit of God, and deliberately

rejected Christ ; while most were more or less committed to the world, and seemingly helplessly entangled by its snares. Many of them declare that even but a short time previous to the event, nothing in the world was more improbable than their conversion. In the case of not a few that improbability was only too patent to all who knew them.

The comparative suddenness of the conversions is also a general feature of the work deserving of notice. Frequently in a single night the scoffer became a praying man ; the sceptic without a lengthened process of reasoning became a believer ; the pleasure-seeker became enamoured with a holy life ; the worldling made a complete rupture with the world ; the self-complacent Pharisee was found among the penitents ; and the man who came in idle curiosity went away in earnest, sober faith. In short, the passing from death unto life was in the consciousness of many, as from the nature of the case it must ever be in point of fact, instantaneous ; and although in the case of others the concomitant struggle extended over a period of days or weeks at most, the outcome always wore the aspect, more or less, of suddenness.

A pleasing feature of the movement among the young men is the large measure of intelligence with which, as a rule, they are able to give a reason for the hope that is in them. Faith in Christ is not necessarily a delusion, a blind impulse, or a hollow pretence, simply because the believer may not be able at the very moment he becomes a disciple to give "the reason why." The child may cry, Abba, Father, without being able very clearly or fully to analyze the character of his father, or to describe the workings of the child-spirit within his heart. But faith is always based on reasons, for the facts of the gospel, the truths of God's Word, are the purest reasons. And the broader the basis of spiritual intelligence the stronger is a true and saving faith. In all the large cities where an awakening has taken place, the testimony of the youth, as ministers and others com-

petent to speak on this point have abundantly acknowledged, has been given with singular clearness, fulness, accuracy, and reasonableness of statement.

Another interesting feature is the joyfulness of the young converts. Gloom, remorse,—the reaction of injured conscience,—one could conceive and account for on grounds wholly apart from faith in the gospel, or spirituality of mind. But a quiet gladness arising out of an avowed acceptance of the truth, and in harmony at once with the worship of God, and with the character and hope of the Christian, can be fully understood only on the twofold supposition that the gospel is true, and the faith of the convert is real. Like the first believers, who “did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God,” the converts generally, and the young men in particular, were full of a spirit of joy and praise.

As a rule, also, the young men are characterized by a teachable disposition. Their new lights, so far from having led them into the dreary, dangerous region of self-inflated wisdom, or the equally unsafe and unprofitable track of those who hunt after petty conceits and flimsy novelties of doctrine, have conducted them to that school of true humility and learning, in which conscious ignorance, like the Psalmist, exclaims, “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.” If a thirst for spiritual knowledge, a desire to know the whole counsel of God, and a readiness to accept instruction from every legitimate source, be any indication of the spirit of discipleship, the young men of this movement are not unworthy of being regarded as followers of Him who said, “Learn of Me.”

One more feature to be noted here is the willingness of the young men to assist in Christian work. Some are already engaged in all the departments of service, while others, having volunteered for service in the home or foreign mission fields, are undergoing a course of training for whatever sphere they may in the providence of God be ultimately designated. To

"stand up for Jesus" in the work of promoting His cause is not the whole of practical Christianity, but it is an important part of it, and a part that has been too much neglected by the great body of the disciples of Christ.

The awakening last year has communicated a powerful impulse to Young Men's Christian Associations. The movement has not only embraced great numbers of young men, drawing them one by one into the sweep of its beneficent current, but it has sent the healing waters of grace into many a centre of social life and activity among the youth of our land. This important result has been largely due, under the hand of God, to the vigorous and well-directed efforts of Mr. Moody.

Of late years Young Men's Christian Associations have not been generally in a prosperous spiritual condition. The dry-rot of deadness was visible everywhere. The worthy leaders struggled bravely against the adversities of the situation, but the chariot wheels dragged heavily. Many good influences were at work; almost everything that human ingenuity could suggest, or human instrumentality could supply, was to be found; but one thing was lacking. There was no quickening breath at work among the dry bones. There was no power to convert the ingenuous youth. There seemed to be little heart even to face the difficulties of winning the young man for Christ at the time when the blood is warm, the world is bright, and a holy life appears a dull and cheerless thing. All the channels of class and lecture, reading-room and benevolent aid, were in full flow; but the channel of spiritual life was as dry as the bed of a summer brook. The prayer-meeting was nowhere. The chief glory of the kingdom of God was not manifest. The Holy Ghost was not working; this was the missing link. In a word, man was there, the Association was there, but the Christianity was nowhere, save in the feeblest form and in the mere name. The aim was good, the principle was sound, but the spirit of the whole thing grovelled.

The young man of the time was regarded as a peculiar creature, to be saved only by a peculiar gospel. It was not sound policy to tell him plainly that he was a sinner, and needed to be saved like other sinners; that he was wicked, and needed to be born again like Nicodemus, or any one else. In fact, it was not to be assumed for one moment that he was to enter the kingdom of heaven by the same gate as his father or his grandfather. He was to be approached by a sapping and mining process. He was to read all modern literature; he was to hear lectures in philosophy, science, and twenty other subjects; and after that, perhaps, he might hear Jesus Christ, if he had a mind. He was not to be asked in a straightforward manner if he would be saved; it was scarcely to be thought of that he should enter the strait gate in an honest, above-board, manly sort of way, like Peter, or Paul, or Luther, or Bunyan, or any others who went in conscience first, and with an honest vengeance.

No; the young man of the time was to be tricked into the kingdom. You were not to tell him what you wanted of him; you were to keep dark, lest he should shy off. And so there were in all the Young Men's Christian Associations plenty of rods without fishing gear, lines without hooks, and hooks without barbs, and baits without hooks, and nets big enough to let whales through them. Moreover, if there were men in all the land skilful in casting doubt on well-ascertained truth, men incapable of stating the plain old gospel, men affecting wisdom above what is written, men able to prate in big swelling words of vanity about "advanced thought," as if the thoughts of the eternal God were behind the age, about "effete dogmas" as if regeneration by the Holy Ghost, and the washing away of sin in the blood of Christ, were wholly out of date, such men were called on to lecture to the young men. There were good men and good lectures of course. But somehow Simon Peter and Simon Magus got so mixed up that the ingenuous youth grew confused. Paul was followed so closely by Elymas the sorcerer, that the gospel,

according to Young Men's Christian Associations, was fast assuming a singular complexion.

What was the result? There were no conversions after the Bible sort. No young men were being turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. When a meeting for the preaching of the ancient gospel of Jesus Christ to young men was announced, to such a pass had matters arrived, that the youth who were certain not to be there were the members of the Association. These rationalizing lecturers and modern-age gossellers not only lack power to awaken in young men's breasts thoughts of an eternal world, and desires that purify the heart and lift up the life, but their eloquence and their ideas seem to be devoid of the moral force by which the schemes of philanthropy are promoted. It was left to the plain, homely, lay-preacher of Chicago, with no power but the gospel and the despised "theology of blood," to call forth the benevolence of the rich to wipe off huge, overshadowing debts; to infuse a new and reviving spirit into decaying societies; and, above all, to rally round the old standard of the cross hosts of young men, filled at once with the ardour of truth and the mightier enthusiasm of a new-born Christian zeal.

The change that has come over the spirit of some of the Associations is no less instructive than it is remarkable. There is not less science, less culture, less philanthropy; but there is more concern about the imperishable interests of the soul, the gospel of the grace of God has recovered its prominence, the work and power of the Holy Ghost is recognized, and infinitely better results are obtained, both for this world and for the next. The leaders and friends of Young Men's Christian Associations have come into the fuller light of a secret which many earnest and faithful pastors knew and practised with abundant success for many years before the recent awakening took place. That secret is nothing else than the power of the "old, old story," to attract and win, to make holy, and to ennoble with true manliness and

wisdom, young men of every class, when the "story" is told lovingly and boldly, in all its freshness and breadth, and in the power of the Holy Ghost.

On leaving Edinburgh the evangelists were taunted with the circumstance that the greater number of their converts in that city consisted of women. Did not this fact argue weakness in the movement, if not hollowness in the work? The mark was hit, the sneer took effect, though in a manner wholly different from any result that could have been anticipated by those who indulged in it. From that day Moody and some of his friends ceased not to lay the matter before the great Master, entreating Him, if it should be for His glory, to wipe out the reproach by the conversion of a multitude of men. What followed? In Glasgow, where some three thousand two hundred persons professed to have believed through grace during the course of the evangelistic services there, upwards of one-half the whole number consisted of men. In Dundee too, in the course of three weeks' special services, inaugurated by Moody on the occasion of his second visit, upwards of one hundred and thirty men were conversed with, almost all of whom professed faith in the Lord Jesus. Not only so; the work among the young men of that town has made steady progress ever since last year, and the signs of blessing from heaven are both abundant and remarkable at the present time. The young men's meetings are assuming large dimensions and an extraordinary aspect, inquirers remaining for conversation at the close of every service, and some every week obtaining, as they believe, entrance into the kingdom of God. In Belfast immense meetings of men were addressed. In Fisherwick Place Church (Rev. H. M. Williamson's) in that city as many as three hundred men were found at the close of a service in deep anxiety, and many professed to believe. In Birmingham, as Rev. R. W. Dale testifies, the evening meetings were largely attended by men, and the greater proportion of

inquirers and young converts appeared to be young men and lads. In Liverpool and the other cities of England visited by the evangelists similar remarkable results were obtained; and although in every instance the majority did not consist of males, the proportion was so large that we heard no more of the taunt. The reproach was wiped out, the adversary had overshot the mark. Never was a cruel word more signally overruled for good.

The effects of the movement generally, and of Mr. Moody's efforts in particular, on Young Men's Christian Associations in this country may be stated in a few words:

1. Several of these Associations have been put on a better footing financially, and in respect of buildings, class-rooms, and other accommodation. In this matter a higher ideal has been set before all of them by Moody. The value of this will be best appreciated by ministers and others engaged in public work for the furtherance of the gospel.

2. The aims and operations have been raised higher, and placed on a more thoroughly spiritual and distinctively Christian basis. Whilst the various collateral and subordinate branches of the work of these Associations have received a fresh impulse, the conversion and upbuilding in Christ of young men are set up as the grand twofold object of their existence. They might now with truth be called "Christian Young Men's Christian Associations."

3. Large accessions to the membership have been made, and these have infused the purest and warmest blood of young Christian life into the societies, their offices, and operations.

4. The quickened life of the Associations and their more decided spiritual tone has brought them into closer contact and harmony with the churches. Their weak point is isolation and independence of the Church. Now it is no longer the Association first and the Church second, but the Church first and the association second.

In a word, the change wrought has been so radical and com-

plete that we are almost ready to exclaim, "The Young Men's Christian Associations are converted!"

Not long ago a young man in this town lay dying. In his last moments, desirous of bearing his testimony to Him in whom he trusted, but no longer able to speak, he called by means of signs for writing material. This was instantly brought him in the form of slate and pencil. With a trembling hand, for the terrible paralysis of death was on him, he traced upon the slate one word twice. That word, writ in large, bold, rugged characters, was this—

VICTORY! VICTORY!

It was the last word. One or two more breaths, and victory was consummated, and the hand, palsied no more, grasped the palm. Young men glory in strength, and pant for victory. But where is strength, and where victory? Let Truth answer: "I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the Wicked One." "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the Wicked One." "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith,"



CHAPTER XV.

AMONG THE CHILDREN.

CAN a child become a subject of the grace that saves? Some seem to think not. The difficulty of Nicodemus was, "Can a man be born when he is old?" The difficulty of many teachers seems to be, "Can a man be born again when he is young?" Too many of those who are occupied in the religious training of children rest satisfied with the mere communication of knowledge, leaving to the distant and uncertain years of maturity the great question of conversion. They proceed on the supposition that infancy, boyhood, girlhood, is no season of saving grace, no convenient time for the Holy Spirit to work. In this way children are compelled to acquire fruitless knowledge, and to practise a hollow morality; for the religious knowledge that yields no peace, no joy, no hope, is worse than unprofitable, and the morality that springs not from the constraining love of Christ is the bondage of law. What would be thought if we informed our adult congregations that, should they pay due heed to present warning and instruction, they may twenty years hence obtain a fair chance of arriving at peace with God, salvation from sin, and hope of everlasting life? Might we not expect the reply, "If that is your gospel, farewell for the present; twenty years hence we may call for you." Is it any wonder if under such teaching conversions among the

young should be rare? Children, always quick in perceiving the scope of your designs on them, are only too glad to postpone conversion until that convenient season of maturity shall come. How cruel to children is this task-work in religion, this implied bondage to the law for an indefinite period of years! Alas! in the case of many a little traveller to eternity, the journey of seventy years is crowded into seventeen. The root of this error may be traced to the same rationalistic spirit that revolts against sudden conversion, because the suddenness does not admit of that lengthened play of human reason and human effort without which proud man is unwilling to be saved. It is the offence of the cross. It is salvation by the works of the law.

The fact is, children may become the subjects of saving grace even as others. From the hour of dawning intelligence, from the time when they are capable of understanding their relation to their parents, children may be taught their relation to God. The light of the knowledge of Christ may dawn as feebly and slowly as reason, and as softly as the first rays of a summer morning, but as surely as either. A child, like any other human being, is converted by the power of the Holy Ghost through the truth of the gospel. It may be through the understanding or the conscience,—it may be through the imagination or through the affections,—that the secret spring of the will receives the mysterious rectifying touch of the Holy Spirit; but in philosopher or child it is essentially the same. The difference is not in the nature of the soil, nor in the seed sown, but in the breadth of the field cultivated. The fruit of the Spirit is in children the same as in others. Difference there may be, nay must be; but that difference is not in kind, but in degree. Is not a child capable through the Holy Spirit of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"?

But the heart of a child is very fickle, says some one, and the fair appearance is often false. But is not every human heart deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked? May a

child be imposed upon by its pleasant emotions or fond imaginings? So may any soul of man in sin. Does the work among the young demand great wisdom and care? That is no reason why the work should be left undone, or done on a wrong principle. Let the needful wisdom and care be given to it.

If we may receive as satisfactory the testimony of those most competent to judge—parents, ministers, teachers—there are vast numbers of children in this country who have recently come out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel. Making due allowance for immaturity of mind and the foibles of childhood, the grace that bringeth salvation may be expected to reveal itself in boyhood or girlhood much as it reveals itself in riper age, and should be judged by the same standard—the Word of God. Certain it is that no sooner had the work of grace begun in our large cities than a singular spirit of inquiry took possession of thousands of little hearts. And this awakening took place not so much in connection with any special evangelistic services, though these were instrumental of much good, as through the ordinary agencies of family, church, and school. The time to favour “the dwellings of Jacob,” as well as “the gates of Zion,” had come, and the faithful labourers in this most important and difficult department of work began to reap the fruit of years of patient toil and prayer.

Some may be disposed to attribute this remarkable movement among the children to the operation of mere sympathy, which is so powerful in the youthful breast. How far this may account for the phenomena, or the facts of the case, it is hard to say. But it should be borne in mind, that as sympathy is part of man's nature, and is of God, its legitimate action should be recognized in religion as well as in other spheres of human activity and social life. In the training of the young, in the formation of character, even in its largest and most powerful forms, in the discharge of duty, in the prosecution of noble enterprise, in the peaceful strife of merchandize and on the field

of battle, amidst the stirring scenes of political agitation and in the arena of divided senates, in the enthusiasm of a nation's uprising and in the momentous crisis of a people's destiny, sympathy has ever played a part not less important, not less essential, not less fruitful of good than reason, or courage, or truth, or righteousness, or the genius of freedom herself. And if the Spirit of God is pleased to employ this mighty force, I had almost said this mightiest of forces in the human breast, as the means of awakening a true spirit of religious inquiry, whether among the young or others, let us rejoice. The divinely-laid rails of sympathy afford, through the power of the Holy Ghost, a suitable and smooth pathway for the chariot of the everlasting gospel. It is thus, indeed, in Pentecostal seasons of spiritual blessing that the Word of the Lord obtains free course and is glorified. Sympathy is the electric wire of the moral and spiritual world, and is destined one day, through the Word and Spirit of God, to bind all communities, nations, and races in one; a unity that will form no mean element in the strength and glory of the kingdom of God on earth. Let us not despise sympathy, but rather seek wisely and constantly to employ it in the service of the gospel.

The work among the young is clearly taking a new departure in our time. Many and various influences are each contributing towards that result. Chiefly, the gradual revival of evangelical religion during the present century, the calling of the Church's attention to the spiritual interests of the young, and the forth-putting of her energies on behalf of the children, both within and without her pale, together with the creation and development of a literature suitable for tender years—a literature which for freshness, purity, variety, and efficiency, must be regarded as a hopeful sign of the times.

For the instruction, conversion, and godly upbringing of the young, the spheres of operation may be set down in the following order:

The Family ;
The School, or Class ;
The Evangelistic Service, or Sermon ; and
The Inquiry-room, or Conversation.

Of these, the family is unquestionably the most important. Nothing can supersede it, nothing for efficiency, when it is rightly used, can equal it. Not less than the Church of God, with its oracles and ordinances, does it bear the clear stamp of divine wisdom and goodness. Although grace does not run in the blood, the marvellous bond that unites parent to child is more frequently employed by the Holy Spirit as the conductor of saving knowledge than any other agency, with the exception perhaps of the ordinance of preaching.

In the work within the sphere of home, the order of means should stand very much as follows :

The Example of Parents ;
Prayer, Social and Secret ;
The Word of God ;
The Catechism, or systematic training in the knowledge of
great principles ; and
Sacred Song, or Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs.

First and foremost, as the most powerful of all home influences, is the example of parents. This is the living epistle, in the large, clear, attractive type of wisdom, purity, truth, uprightness, goodness, with the illuminated capitals of combined gentleness and firmness, interspersed with pictures of innocent hilarity, self-sacrificing love, and Christ-like patience. Such fair scenes are sure to be photographed by the bright sun of early life upon the hearts of the little ones in lines and impressions never to be effaced. "Mother," said a little boy the other day, as he sat listening to the matchlessly wonderful story of Jesus, "Mother, is Jesus like father?" "Why do you ask that, my dear?" said the mother. "Because," replied the child, "father

cried when Mary told the lie. I never saw father cry before: did you, mother?" Now, that is perfectly natural, and illustrates the nearness of heaven to earth in the twin golden links, at once divinely human, and humanly divine, the family and the gospel, or father and Jesus.

Let it never be forgotten, that amidst diversified agencies and lighter instrumentalities, no means of instructing the young can effectually supersede the catechetical method. Drill, early, regular, stern, in first truths, in systematic theology, is essential to breadth of religious intelligence, depth of religious conviction, and strength of religious character. A wise severity of mental discipline produces clearness, strength, hard-headedness; and in good truth hard-headedness is as much needed in religion as in anything else. Let the severity of the good old-fashioned method of indoctrinating the youthful mind be tempered with kindness and sweetness. But no amount of preaching, story-telling, or of making things pleasant in any manner, will do the proper work of catechising. If we are to exchange that time-honoured "rod" for sticks of mere sugar-candy in our methods, the result will be perhaps more religion, but with certainly less backbone in it.

The songs recently introduced will, in the hands of parents, be of incalculable value. This is most of all the mother's instrument. Singing comes naturally to her hand. Given godly mothers, and pure Christian songs, and the nation that fears God is at hand. The tool of the iron-moulder with which he touches off the sandy moulds, small and fine as a feather, though it be, prepares the forms of beam, and pinion, and ponderous wheel of mammoth engines. So the mothers with their songs and stories, and kisses and tears, and gentle touches, are moulding the men that are coming next to re-cast and move and manage the great world. Mothers, sing the gospel.

Robert Annan, a man of great faith, was in great travail of spirit about the salvation of his infant daughter Jemima from

the day of her birth. On the night before the Sabbath when she was to be publicly dedicated to the Lord in baptism he could not rest, and spent its long hours in prayer, never ceasing until he felt assured that the child was the Lord's. When he came out of the room where he had been wrestling all night, he said to his wife, "I believe our little girl is Christ's. She is a dear child, but beware of making an idol of her." That Sabbath—well do I remember—when, after the Presbyterian custom, the father held up the babe in baptism, he trembled all over, and almost fell, so deeply was he moved. Not many months after this he was seen lifting in his strong arms from the deep waters another child, to him a stranger and an alien, to save whose life he sacrificed his own, and sank into a premature but heroic grave.* In the matter of his infant's salvation he died in faith. Some seven years passed away, and a little child of bright complexion and sparkling intelligence is sitting in the Union prayer-meeting held by the American evangelists in Dundee early in 1874. Seated beside her mother, she sings "Sweet Hour of Prayer" with a warmth that attracts attention. "Does your child understand what she is singing?" was the question of a lady who was struck with the fervour of the little singer. "Yes, she understands it," was the mother's reply; "she is a child who loves prayer." That little girl was *Jemima Annan*. Her father's prayer had been answered; she was indeed a disciple of Jesus.

On the day following she was taken ill of scarlatina. It was near the hour of midnight on Sabbath when her uncle took me to see her. Throughout her three days' illness she continued to sing. "I feel like singing all the time" was often on her lips. She spoke much of heaven, and loved to sing "In the Land beyond the shadows." One she had learned from Mr. Sankey, "I am so glad Jesus loves me," she continued to sing as long

* See *Life of Robert Annan*.

as consciousness remained. This verse she repeated again and again—

“ Oh, if there’s only one song I can sing,
When in His beauty I see the great King,
This shall my song in eternity be,
‘Oh, what a wonder that Jesus loves me!’ ”

“ I am going to Jesus, mother,” she said ; “ I am not afraid to die, because I am going to Jesus. And I shall see my father too,” she added with sweet simplicity. At the time her father’s noble career came to its heroic close, Jemima was only some seven months old. But she had been often told the story of his life and death, and she seemed to know him well. Heaven was to her the place where she would dwell with Jesus and her father. Not long after she had sung her last song she went home to God. About two hours after my visit she died. Jemima now sings in heaven.

As I left the house near midnight, a gleam of light from the window fell upon the pavement, and revealed the word “ Eternity ! ” I started back, and felt I was treading on holy ground. On the morning of the day on which Robert Annan fell a sacrifice to his heroic endeavour to save the life of the drowning boy he had chalked that word upon the pavement.

I could not help calling to mind another young man, who moved in a different sphere, the late lamented Hon. James Gordon, son of the Earl of Aberdeen. That young nobleman was deeply impressed by reading that portion of the sketch of Annan’s life in which the incident just referred to is related. “ Eternity ! eternity ! ” kept ringing in his ears. Thus he was stirred up and blessed. So deeply moved was he by the story, that on leaving home for Cambridge he requested that the word ETERNITY should be carved, at his expense, on the stone on which Robert Annan had chalked it, so that it might preach for ever afterwards to all who passed that way. Just two days after I had received a letter from his mother conveying her son’s

request, the young nobleman was accidentally shot dead. When afterwards the awful word was being carved on the pavement-stone, we seemed to hear the united voices of Robert Annan and James Gordon, gathered by divine grace from the two extremes of social life, calling aloud from on high, "Cut it deep, very deep; for eternity is long, very long."

Another instance of the answer to a father's prayers coming down years after his death may be given. One day a godly elder in this town communicated to his minister what he considered to be a sore trial. He had devoted his children to Christ at their birth, he had prayed for them without ceasing, he had laboured for their salvation, but not one of them gave any sign of grace. In particular, his eldest son, for whose salvation most of all he had travailed for years, was extremely wayward and rebellious. The minister, believing it to be for the trial of the good man's faith, exhorted him to patience and hope. Soon afterwards the father died. After the father's death, the son, to the astonishment of all who knew him, was converted; the wild, reckless young man became a sedate, meek, gentle Christian. He became a head to the family, and conducted its affairs with consummate prudence and zeal. In the awakening last year five more of the children were converted; a sixth, a young man, is among the seekers, and the only one left is a child. If the father could look down from heaven and see his children bending around the family altar in believing, joyful worship, would it not inspire his song with a louder, sweeter note of gratitude and praise?

Take another instance of answer to a father's prayer and blessing on the early consecration of a child. At one of our meetings last year an elder in one of our churches, esteemed for his piety and life-long consistency, stood up and made the following statement. Converted when a youth, he burned in heart to carry the gospel to the heathen, and in secret prayer devoted himself to the work of Christ in Africa, to which public

attention was then being called. Providential events, over which he had no control, unexpectedly arose, in consequence of which the young man was compelled to abandon his purpose of becoming a missionary to Africa. He settled down at home, married, and became a father. On the birth of his first-born son his spirit was greatly exercised in prayer, and he was led deliberately, solemnly, and humbly to dedicate his little boy to the Lord, and to offer him for the service of Christ in Africa. From this time forth his constant prayer was, that God might be pleased to take the son for the father, anoint him with His grace, and thrust him forth to proclaim salvation to the sable sons of Ham. The thought of his heart he kept wholly to himself. Not a human being knew of it; not even did he tell the child as he grew up. In the course of years the boy became a student, successfully passed through his course, gave himself to God, and became a minister of the gospel. His desire, his ambition was to settle down at home as the pastor of a territorial mission church, and his aptitude coincided with his liking for that kind of work. Providence again interposed. This plan was overturned. All of a sudden the young minister intimated to his father that he had resolved on giving himself to the work of Christ in *Africa*. The father was overwhelmed with astonishment and joy, and scarce could find words in which aright to thank and praise his God. The son knew nothing of the father's long-cherished desire and oft-repeated prayer. The son is now in Africa, where he labours with immense energy and cheering tokens of blessing among one of its most benighted tribes.

The work of grace is best illustrated in the lives of the saints; but we love to mark its soft and heavenly radiance amidst the darkness of the valley and in scenes of sorrow. Many death-bed scenes, full of interest and instruction, have of late been witnessed. We have heard the children in their last moments speak of the things of God with an intelligence and a

simplicity of faith which has been both a lesson and a reproof to older Christians. Beyond measure affecting is it to hear the little ones sing their sweet gospel hymns with their dying breath. "Oh, mother, how I wish you were going with me!" said a little girl the other day as she lay dying. "I cannot go with you, dear," replied the mother; "Jesus wants you to go alone to Him." "Going to Jesus," repeated the child twice, as if pondering the full significance of the word. Then, after a pause, she said she was satisfied, adding, "Mother, you will come by-and-by." She then sang, "Jesus loves even me," and died.

Another little girl of seven, who had previously given touching evidence of having received the grace of God, was singing the hymn, "The Gate Ajar for me," as she lay dying. Her little sister Bessie, not three years old, joined in the singing to the extent of repeating, "For me, for me." As the elder sister sung, the little one would keep time with her hands and feet, always chiming in with her own part, "For me, for me." The older one continued singing till consciousness failed, and shortly afterwards she died. Bessie followed her sister in two days. The last words she lisped were, "For me, for me—Bessie, Jesus." As we laid her beside her sister, we thought we heard, in response to the infant's refrain, "For me, for me," a voice from above, saying, "Yes, Bessie, for thee, for thee." Surely "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise."

Last year a little boy of seven ran home from the Sabbath-school, and said to his mother with an earnestness of manner that startled her, "Mother, I have learned a wee prayer." He insisted on her finding it for him in the Bible. It was in Psalm li. 10, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." This new prayer, or as he henceforth termed it his "wee prayerie," he preferred to every other. Night and day he continued to pray for the new heart, till at length it seemed plain enough to his godly mother that a great

change had passed over him. Shortly after this he sickened and died. During his illness he said, "Mother, whether shall I pray to be made well again, or to go to Jesus?" The mother counselled him to put into his prayer, "If Thou wilt." This quite satisfied the little one, and then he gently breathed his last.

"Father," said a little girl, who was converted last year, "why don't you read your Bible?" The father was pricked to the heart by the question of his little daughter, but was too proud to answer. Not long after this, the child took ill of fever and died. The father was overwhelmed with sorrow and conviction of sin. The child's question came back upon him by day and by night. He seemed to hear her speaking down from heaven, and still asking, "Father, why don't you read your Bible?" At last his pride gave way. He took his Bible, and read, and pondered, and prayed. His godly wife came to his aid. Light from above visited him, and he now rejoices in the Lord. He is a member of a church in this town, and walks worthily. He says he could give a world if only his little girl could look down upon him, and see him reading the Bible as the very Word of God, and of life to him.

"Mother," said an intelligent little boy as he lay dying, "why was Christian afraid in the valley? Was not Jesus with him?" "Yes," said the mother, "Jesus was with him, but he did not know it. He was afraid, because he did not know that Jesus was with him." "Then, mother," said the little pilgrim, "I will not be afraid, because I know that Jesus is with me, and won't leave me." Nor was he afraid. Although his sufferings were extreme, the brave little fellow said he was not afraid, "because Jesus was with him," and so he went peacefully home. No wonder if the mother said, "I thought I could not have stood all this trial. But I seem as if I had been on Pisgah all the time." Thus grace often reverses the order of nature, and the child teaches and blesses the parent. "A little child shall lead them."

"What shall I do for my darling boy?" said a mother, a little while ago, as she saw the tokens of approaching death in the countenance of her little son, and shuddered at the prospect of separation. The child, turning his head on the pillow, darted a solemn glance, and said, "Mother, *pray*." She felt the wisdom of the counsel. It was a word of seasonable reproof. But as if to mingle comfort with the admonition, he added with much sweetness, "Mother, I am going to *heaven*." It was enough. The mother was enabled to surrender her child to the Lord, and to resign herself to His holy will. The little believer passed away home, and the mother thinks of those two words and their meaning as she never did before, "Pray!" "Heaven!"

Of the many boys and girls who have recently acknowledged the power of the gospel, most have been converted by the ordinary agencies of family, church, or school. In some cases a whole class, and in others a whole family have come into the light of God's countenance. Take an instance of the latter.

One night in the meeting for inquirers I found a whole family of six seeking the way to the feet of Jesus. The eldest, a grown-up girl, was rejoicing in Christ; the others, three girls and two boys, in age ranging from eight to sixteen, were weeping most bitterly, and entreating the Lord to convert them. In every instance, these children traced their first impressions to the teachings of their mother. "Mother is always speaking to us about Jesus," they said. The importance and value of home-training was apparent in the questions put to those who sought to point them to the Lamb of God. They all had clear views of sin. Conversion seemed to stand out distinct before their minds as essential to salvation. "Oh, tell me," said one of the boys, "what true believing is!" "Oh, my sins!" said one of the girls; and then she wept bitterly. The next day, thanksgiving was offered at the prayer-meeting for the bringing of six lambs into the fold of Jesus. Nor does it appear that these lambs have ever since left that fold.

Sometimes children were earnestly seeking the Lord without their parents so much as observing it. An esteemed minister of the gospel in Edinburgh, in the course of conversation, communicated to me the following incident. He was in Glasgow assisting in the good work there, and on returning to the house where he lodged one night at a somewhat late hour, he explained to the lady that he had been conversing with inquirers. "Tell me about that," she said, with a look that suggested to her guest that she was herself anxious. He described a case. The effect was that the lady acknowledged her own need of salvation. A conversation followed, the result of which was her cordial and joyful closing with Christ. Immediately, though the hour was unseasonable, she rushed away to speak to her children, now in bed. First she went to her little daughter's room, and inquired if she was thinking of seeking the Saviour. "Mother," replied the child in a joyful tone, "I have found Jesus." Away then to the room of her boy, where she put the same question. "Are you not anxious about being saved?" she asked. "Mother," was the reply, "I am just thirsting for Him. You remember that hot day last year when we climbed yon hill, and I was very thirsty, mother; I am just like that, thirsting for Christ."

"Mother," said a little fellow who had gone to bed the previous night in trouble of soul, "do you know where I slept last night?" "No," replied the mother, "perhaps at the foot of the bed." "Mother," said the happy boy, "I slept in the arms of Jesus."

Sometimes young persons were brought to the Lord in a singular manner. W. H——, a boy of twelve, was employed to run messages in connection with a building firm. One day some of the masons hired him to speak provoking words to a young man, a Christian, at work on the same building. Often had these men endeavoured to tempt the young Christian into the use of profane or angry words. But in vain. To their most cruel taunts and their most lying insinuations he invariably

gave a meek reply, or held his peace. Now, on the promise of a small sum of money, W. H—— was engaged to play the part of tempter. The words were put into his mouth. He was to go and call him a revivalist, a hypocrite, and what not. All the more was the scheme likely to prove successful in that the young convert was at work by himself, quite apart from the rest. Alone, and assailed by a mere child, would he not indulge in wrathful words, or worse? The little messenger of Satan went over to begin the assault. But remembering how good and gentle the young man had been to him and the other workmen, he repented of the project, and instead of hurling against him the carefully-prepared bolts, he threw his arms around his neck, burst into tears, and begged him to speak to him of Jesus. An explanation followed. The young Christian spoke of Jesus to the boy, and little Willie, the messenger boy, was converted. They are now of course bosom friends, and go on lovingly together, while the adversaries have been utterly confounded.

Much remains to be done for the furtherance of the work of God among the young. We need better accommodation for our schools and classes, and a more thorough organization of the entire machinery. More attention must be paid to the training of teachers. The standard of qualification in point of intelligence, aptitude for teaching, and spirituality, needs to be raised. For this end every pastor should have a little theological hall of his own. Throwing all his learning, enthusiasm, and piety into this work, the minister, as a teacher of teachers, will do more for the conversion and godly upbringing of the young than by more direct efforts in the shape of addresses and sermons. A pastor full of the Holy Ghost, with a heart overflowing with love to the little ones, and glowing in sympathy with the teachers, will not lack either a staff of suitable assistants, or a blessing in the work. Under the ministry of wise and holy men, teachers of the right stamp invariably spring up. This is a law in the kingdom of God. And teachers of the right sort, speaking the

truth in love to the young, carrying them prayerfully in their bosoms all the week, occasionally inviting the whole class to a simple little social treat at home, and always following them with the kindness of Jesus, cannot fail of success.

Where the school is large, an infant department is requisite and advantageous. For this branch of the work there should be an efficient superintendent and a staff of assistant workers.

In our large cities and towns, where so many children grow up in ignorance and irreligion, a staff of visitors, whose sole work is to search out and bring in the neglected little ones, should, if possible, be attached to every Sabbath-school or Sabbath morning meeting. Only a small percentage of the lapsed masses can ever be brought within the scope of Christian influences; for so utterly destroyed are they by vice, that many of them are, we fear, *physically* past all redemption. But *all the children* belonging to that class may be reached. If the Church of Christ were thoroughly alive in the Spirit to this work, there is not a child in all the land, except such as are bound in fetters of bigotry, not even the children of the drunkard, the sceptic, and the thief, not the wildest arab of the street, or dirtiest imp of the gutter, or most abject denizen of the hovel, but might by prayer and pains be brought under the softening, sweetening, wonder-working power of the gospel. In this way the stream of evil that now pollutes and lays waste our great cities would be cut off at the fountain. This is the only solution, so far as we can see, of the great home-mission problem. But this implies a quickened and holy Church, whose office-bearers and members are in heart and in deed fellow-workers with God, and are filled even to enthusiasm with zeal for the divine glory, and compassion for a perishing world. For this arduous and noble enterprise your shallow, frivolous, dance-loving, Sabbath-school teachers are totally unfit. Men and women, dead to the world, consecrated in soul, body, and spirit, to whose clear vision heaven and hell are open, whose heart and tongue are on fire with love, they and

they only can work out the ends for which the Son of God suffered and died.

The conversion and godly upbringing of the young is, perhaps, the Church's greatest work. Its importance can hardly be exaggerated. Those who are converted in early life, develop a nobler type of Christian character than usually follows on late conversion. In religion, as in other things, "prevention is better than cure." If the soul is healed before the hideous wound of sin has run the whole round of all possible disease, spiritual health will surely be more vigorously developed. Many Christians are weak and sickly, because they tarried in Satan's service until they were crippled and maimed for life. They have only one hand or one eye wherewith to serve Christ. Some things grace cannot do. It cannot recall youth; it cannot bring back its lost opportunities; it cannot restore its wasted powers. Great numbers of converted children, growing up in the nurture and fear of the Lord, would make the Church far purer and stronger than she now is, and would certainly prepare the way for more signal triumphs of the gospel than any we have yet seen. Let us rejoice that the ladder Jacob saw in vision reaches down to the nursery and the Sabbath-school. Of late we have heard the clatter of many little feet upon its steps, and the hum of the cheery voices of the little ones, climbing up on Him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."



CHAPTER XVI.

THE WORK AMONG THE MASSES.

IT has been frequently urged against the recent movement, that "the masses" were not reached by it. It was thought to be an indication of weakness, if not of utter failure, in a great evangelistic work, that it scarcely touched or wrought any good for the class most in need of the gospel. Two things are forgotten by those who make that objection. First, they forget that thousands within the pale of the Church need to be evangelized quite as much as the heathen at home or abroad. That is to say, thousands need to be converted from the heathenism of a sham Christianity to reality and life in Christ. And, secondly, they overlook this important point, that unless the Church herself is quickened and filled with the Spirit, the masses will never be reached, for it is only or mainly through the instrumentality of a revived Church that the stupendous work of reclaiming the waste places of the land can be accomplished.

With every work of grace the world will have some fault to find. In 1859-60, when the awakening embraced very largely the lower classes (although it was by no means confined to such), the critics said it was nothing else than a religious ferment among the ignorant rabble. Now, when a large number of the class supposed to be more intelligent are embraced, objection is taken because the lowest strata of society are not reached. It is nothing other, say the critics, than a fever of pious sensationalism among the more religiously inclined sort of people.

"Why don't you go to the deep sea to fish?" To this the fisherman may reply, "I came upon a shoal of fishes near the shore, and I filled my boat: I took the first that came, and where is the folly or the harm?" The American evangelists did the work which God in His providence laid to their hand.

We do not find fault with the blacksmith because, instead of going down to the mine, he spends his strength in sharpening the miner's tools. Nay, the blacksmith goes down into the mine and works in every tool he has sharpened. In truth, the recent awakening will probably bear its most precious fruits in the field of Christian work. Already the movement has reached the very lowest classes. In Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, and other towns, a work of Christian philanthropy has been begun on which every one touched with feelings of patriotism and humanity must look with sympathy. I allude to the Sabbath morning Free Breakfast, by means of which the gospel is brought down to the most abject poor. This Christ-like work has already borne good fruit.

This effort, as I can testify from personal observation, is conducted with Christian wisdom no less than zeal. No work is done inconsistent with the strictest observance of the Lord's-day. The entire preparations for the Sabbath-morning meal are made on the afternoon or evening of the previous Saturday. The tea and sugar are weighed out, the bread is cut, the butter is spread, the flesh-meat is divided into suitable portions, and everything, down to the most minute details, is put in readiness. All this is done with prayer and thanksgiving. On the morning of the Lord's-day the workers are early at their post, some as ushers, some as cooks, some as waiters, some as singers, and some as speakers, a band of Christian volunteers whose sole reward is the joy of serving the Lord, and doing good to the souls and bodies of their fellow-men. Prayer and praise, the Word of God read and explained, are the main features. Ere the first match is struck at five o'clock to light the fire prayer

is offered, and all is done under the eye of Him who, when He fed the famishing multitude, ordered them to be ranged by fifties on the grass, blessed with thanksgiving the bread to be dispensed, and commanded the disciples to gather up the fragments, that nothing might be lost. The whole service, including the serving and partaking of the meal, is quiet, orderly, and impressive. In fact, you could scarcely find greater decorum, solemnity, or tenderness even in the observance of the Lord's Supper. The whole arrangements and proceedings remind one of a well-ordered Christian family at the double service of family worship and morning meal. The cheerfulness of the table does not lessen the reverence at the altar. Nor does the solemnity of the worship detract from the hearty enjoyment of the meal. The table and the altar seem all in one. The physical and spiritual spheres are happily blended for once.

But such a company!—hundreds of human beings, both the “humanity” and the “being” in many instances barely visible! Utter wrecks many of them are, mere fragments of body and soul,—old, haggard, lean, skeleton-looking men and women, life in some cases apparently not worth a week's purchase. Some of them are clean and decent-looking, a little self-respect having miraculously survived the storms of a lifetime. Others are blotched and scarred, having fought an hundred fights with God and man, bearing the marks of every passion and every vice, smitten almost past hope with the most loathsome leprosies of sin, familiar with slums and jails, and having obviously newly crawled out of the ooze of a debasement far below the level of ordinary wickedness. Many are evidently well acquainted with sorrow, with nakedness, with hunger, and a perpetual struggle for existence, in which the odds are plainly on the side of misfortune and misery and death. There are young men and women who have made shipwreck of soul and body ere the voyage is well begun. Here is a purple-faced jail-bird, a strongly-built man with little brain, less heart, and scarce a soul, a conscienceless

character, having no fear of God or man, whose visage tells his story in large, bold type—the huge jaw, the villainous, leering eye, murder in every feature, with blood enough in him, and heat enough in that blood, to put a whole village of decent people mad, if the scoundrelism of the man were parcelled out among them. His face is washed for the occasion, and his hair is done up in the manner of his class.

Here is a wretched-looking mother, bareheaded and scantily clad, with a babe hanging on her breast, a pale, shrivelled-up, skin-and-bone creature with a dull, sunken eye, a weary, pained, ready-to-weep look, and the very features of age. The singing of the hymn is telling on her; she is evidently musing on former happy days, as she peers into the face of her starved and consumptive babe. Yonder is another mother, but the music has sent her away into the future, brightening to her fancy, while the present is forgotten, and she smiles unconsciously as she contemplates the face of the sleeping infant in her arms, and pictures a bright career for her little boy. An aged crone is so completely absorbed in the singing of the hymn, "The Lost Sheep," that in imagination she seems to be "away on the mountains wild and bare;" for the hand with the slice of bread is suspended midway to the mouth, while the mug in the other hand leans over and the tea is dribbling out. Another careworn creature, who looks both young and old, claims to be the mother of "six bairns," with whom she says she is "sairly trachilled," having to "fecht for bread to them a'." An aged man of the old Scottish type, looking clean and newly-shaved, his head large and brow full, with plenty of shaggy hair and doubtless also plenty of brains, his countenance severe and mantled with a slight scepticism, is surveying all things with the eye of a philosopher, and as if not sure but this new kind of thing is loosening old Scotland from her moorings, refuses to be carried off his feet by tea, or hymn-singing, or organ-playing, and is resolved to take the whole business, speeches included, to that

avizandum of cautious reflection which is said to be the characteristic of his race.

One woman refuses the breakfast, and insists on joining the choir. Despite the meanness of her apparel, and the drunken soddenness of her face, she looks as if she had seen better days and had come down in the scale. In her excitement she says, "I cannot taste anything. Oh, sir, surely this is heaven itself!" "It is not heaven quite," I replied, "but it may be the way to it." "Oh, sir," she exclaimed, bursting into tears, "I am in a bad case." "This is not heaven yet then," I said; "but tell me your name, and where you come from." She mentioned her name, and her native place. "What!" I said, "are you the sister of my old college companion, Mr. —, who is now minister of — Church?" She proved to be the same. It was a sad, sad story. The old fiend, that peoples the deepest pit of sin, debasement, and woe on earth—drunkenness—had got possession of that wretched woman and brought her thus low. All our efforts for her recovery were foiled. Again and again was she clothed by the hands of our good Dorcases, but only to be found as bad as ever a day or two after. As a last resource we put her on her way to her friends, by whom however she was not wanted, for they too were baffled and in despair.

Yonder are two young men. They have been kicking against the pricks, and their heels are bleeding. Expecting a reproof, they hang their heads in shame. Holding out my hand to them with a word of kind greeting, they suddenly break down, and seizing the proffered hand, burst into tears. Wonderful is the power of a little well-timed kindness. There is still hope for these prodigals. Perhaps two mothers are this morning praying for them. Pray on, mothers; yours is the mightiest of gospel agencies on earth!

Speaking to that curious assemblage was very easy. This seemed to be due partly to the softening influences of kindness, the utter absence of officialism and formality, but chiefly to the

working of the grace of God. "Look at these hands. They are flesh and blood like your own; we are all of one flesh; all born of Adam and Eve." This seemed at once to bridge over that wide and accursed gulf of class feeling, which is working almost as much evil in our country as caste in India. It is not enough to say that these poor people listened; they *drank in* the gospel, they received the Word joyfully, they wept.

In the midst of the proceedings my attention was drawn to a young man apparently in the last stage of declining health. Of the three hundred miserables present he seemed to be the most abject and woe-stricken. He was the only one on whom the singing made no visible impression. He was too far gone for that. There was neither smile nor tear. The face was not without expression, but it was passionless. It wore an awful calm, the solemnity of fixed and hopeless sorrow. The hand of death was on him. The finely-formed head, covered with bushy locks of jet-black hair, a delicately-chiselled countenance, rendered interesting in no ordinary degree by the "pale cast" of sorrow if not of "thought," the too clear eye that in its unnatural brightness seemed to look into eternity, the emaciated form barely covered with the sheerest tatters, completed a picture which for melancholy might have melted a heart of stone. On thousands of wretched creatures have I looked, but never had I seen a young man in such rags. Never had I seen a human being so near the grave abroad, and in a public meeting. He had waited patiently for the tea, but he could not taste it; and for the gospel, but the sound of it died on his ears. Laying his hand on his heart, whose last throb was not far off, he rose from his seat and reeled towards the door. Two of the young men assisting ran to his help, and led him into the cool air. They moistened his lips with water, and laved his brow, but in vain. It was too late for him to tell his story. Besides, of what use were the recital now that he was about to leave a world that scarce had room for the like of him, and was going away to tell

his story to the God that made him? Hunger and Helplessness, the grim police of fallen humanity, had dragged him to the free breakfast; now Disease and Death, the stern and unrelenting executioners of the broken law, were leading him away to the eternal destiny. Gathering himself up for a last effort, he crept down the steps, and stole away into a neighbouring court, where he disappeared in those deep shades of sunless, airless city existence, where only a miraculous physical vitality could endure the effects of the poisoned atmosphere, and nothing less than a preternatural morality could survive the ten thousand temptations and curses that find their native home in those dens and caves of modern society.

Oh, what a satire upon our wealth and pride, our civilization and Christianity, is the neighbourhood of all this poverty and suffering, this ignorance and vice! Conceal it as we may, this heap of sin and misery is the dunghill of our wealth and commerce. This hideous creature is the illegitimate offspring of modern society. It is the rotten plank in our ship. Ye proud ones, go behind the scenes, and behold reality for once. It might teach you the first lesson of wisdom—sobriety of thought; to get away from the glare and finery of your drawing-rooms, from your many-coursed tables, where you feed yourselves without fear, and fatten yourselves for the worms, and go down to see your own flesh and blood in its nakedness and misery. Do not tell me they suffer because they sin. If they suffer more than you, it is only because they sin less cunningly than you, and in circumstances of greater disadvantage. You go to the world's great Bank of Gilded-sin, where you draw on a larger and longer credit, while they go to the Devil's Pawn; and the difference is, they pay an interest that brings them speedier ruin than you. Piercing are the cries of the many sufferers whose appeal is to the Lord of Sabaoth; but the sounds of your music and your revelry drown to your ears those cries. The rattle of your carriages on the streets prevent you hearing the death-rattle in

your brother's throat behind yon tottering wall. You build your palaces, and adorn them with hangings of purple and blue; you make for yourselves saloons like the halls of fairies; you turn your domestic life into a theatre of pomp and display, a scene of sensual appetite and luxury; but you do not perceive that you are building on an abyss. Let alone an eternal world, there is a world to come in this life, and it is coming with vengeance on you. There is a monster down in the cellar of our city-life which, grown to maturity, will level your palaces with the ground, and scatter your wealth and prosperity to the winds of heaven.

But where all the while is our Christianity? Why, it is sitting in its cushioned pew in yon fashionable church, with its handsomely-bound Bible and Psalm-book in its gloved hand, listening devoutly to a neatly-composed essay on faith, hope, and charity, and is in the full enjoyment of the rounded periods, the rounded prayers, the rounded everything, for Christian gentility can endure no angles and no points; and afterwards, when the benediction is pronounced—a blessing as hollow as the thing blessed—Christianity goes home to dine, and rest, and be thankful. All the time, and within stone-throw, there is a hell of misery, ignorance, and sin. If the windows were not filled with stained glass, you could see the pandemonium from your pew. But you are wise in your generation to paint your windows, and so conceal from view the nearer hell, even as the further hell is not seen through your painted gospel. But has not Christianity built her poor-house, and bestowed her donation on the Home Mission? Yes; and that is so far well. But is it not written, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world"? (James i. 27.) Alas! how many thousands there are within the Christian pale, who never speak one word for Christ, never shed one tear of sympathy, never put forth one serious per-

sonal effort to save a soul, or lessen by a single unit the terrible sum of ignorance and sin. Surely such Christianity needs to be Christianized, to be baptized into Christ, and made worthy to bear that blessed name.

Happily, there are many Christian communities and individuals, who in love and in good earnest are charging themselves with the most stupendous of all responsibilities, the responsibility of their neighbours' souls, and sorrows, and sins. Nor is their labour in vain. Even from this heap of human wreckage and moral rubbish, jewels are being gathered for the brightest crown of heaven. Sometimes the blessing received at these Free Breakfasts is acknowledged in sincere and touching words; and sometimes the moral change effected is striking enough to be patent to all. Here, for instance, is a man who rises to request special prayer on his own behalf. He tells his story.

"My freends, I want your prayers. I'm goin' up to Perth to the Militia, and I ken ower weel hoo sair I'm to be temptit. I hope ye'll keep me in mind, and pray that I may get grace to stan' fast.

"I wish to tell you that nane o' you need despair. I've been worse than any o' you. I've been further doon than ony I see here. Aye, I was sic a wrack afore I was thirty, that I was flung into the poor-house, because I was nae mair use to mysel' or ony body else. A young man's gey far doon when he's tumbled into that hole.

"Weel, I cam' to the br'akfast here wi' a' my sins on me. I heard the gospel. Ah, that was a grand br'akfast! The gospel took effect on me. It's jist three months sin' I cam' to ken the happiness o' Christ, an' I wud na gie these three months' peace for a' the pleasures o' the ither thirty years. Drunkenness was a main cause o' my ruin. The drunkard seems to me to be like a man-o'-war that's abandoned by the crew and boarded by the enemy, an' the enemy turns the guns against the richtfu' owners. But it's nae eneuch to be teetotal. The

deevil cud mak' a teetotaller, but he cudna mak' a Christian. It taks Christ to mak' a Christian. But dinna despair; I was wair (worse) than ony o' you."

These people are visited at their homes and lodgings, and carefully watched over by the workers. Persons of this class will fall twenty times, and twenty times need to be lifted up again. Some such we have known, who after repeated falls were recovered, and established in well-doing.

Some of the good effects of the Free Breakfast may be put before the reader in a few words.

1. Much misery has been relieved or alleviated, and warm rays of happiness have been shed into many joyless hearts—no mean result in a world so full of trouble.

2. Many have heard the joyful sound of the gospel who could not be reached in any other way. These get a chance; and an opportunity to them is beyond all price.

3. That whole class, the irreligious, the profligate, and the vicious, have been brought in this way to associate the idea of religion, the religion of Christ, with benevolence, mutual love, and innocent happiness. A much needed and useful lesson.

4. Some of these wairfs and miserales have been reclaimed from vice; some have been led to place themselves permanently under the ministry of the gospel; and some, it is believed, have even been gathered into the kingdom of God.

5. That portion of the world which sneers at spiritual religion as a ghostly affair, a thing of prayers and tracts, is compelled to acknowledge that Christianity in earnest is at least benevolent, philanthropic, and so far practical and effective.

6. The workers derive a benefit in proportion to their labour of love. To those whose religion teaches them to live for the good of others the nearest road to heaven is to go down through those depths, scattering seeds of truth and kindness all the way for the love of God and the good of all.



CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUSION.

IT may be worth while in closing to glance at some of the objections made to the recent movement, and then briefly notice some of its dangers, results, and lessons.

Objection has been taken on various grounds. Some cannot away with sudden conversions. The force of this objection bears most of all against the work at Pentecost. Their theory of conversion, therefore, whatever it is, cannot be scriptural. The root of this objection, we fear, lies in the rationalistic spirit of fallen man, who will still insist on having a chief hand in the work of his own recovery. When closely examined, the objection implies the denial of a turning-point in the experience of saved men; and that is really to deny regeneration and faith.

Some object to revival on the score of inevitable reaction; and, as usual, these have of late predicted that "it will not last." To this we might reply that many good things do not last. We might as well object to spring and summer, for they do not last; or to man himself, because he soon goes his way, and disappears. It is a happy circumstance that many good things do not last for ever. The old passes away, and then we get something new and better in its stead. God is ever changing things, and will not suffer them to last. "But then," says the objector, "reaction is not good; it does harm." There is a reaction, no doubt, that

is evil, and against such we have need to be on our guard. But there is a reaction that arises only where there is life, and is inseparable from it. There is no reaction in a dead church. There are no tides in a stagnant pool. A dead church is at the wall; it cannot go further back. Formalists and nominal professors are incapable of any such relapse. A man of straw never grows cold. A dead tree suffers neither from the summer's drought, nor the winter's blast. A horse treading the mill-round cannot go back. A poor huckster, with his barrow and sixpenny-worth of rags, bones, and candy, never appears in the bankruptcy court. Dead men may crumble, but stumble they cannot. These are the very people that cry out against revival on account of reaction. There always will be tares among the wheat. When the barn-floor is threshed out and cleared, no doubt the usual proportion of chaff will be found. What then? What does the Master teach us in the parable of the sower? What took place under His own ministry? Was there no reaction? Did not many go back, and walk no more with Him? And what under the apostles? Is primitive Christianity itself to be condemned, because some of its converts returned to the world?

Some made objection to the recent movement simply because it did not tally with their theory of revival. If anything enters, though but accidentally, into an actual movement which is not comprised in their ideal, the whole thing is spurious; not of God, but of the devil. This objection implies that a revival is not really the work of the Spirit in any degree, in any sense, if it be not absolutely free from imperfection. And yet those who make that objection, when they sit at the Lord's table, or enter the pulpit, must have both error and sin in them, and in their work. Is the Spirit then not with them at all, and not in their service at all? In this objection, we fear, there is a presumptuous, wicked dictating to the Holy Ghost.

The Ritualist has opposed the work because it is humbling to the pride of sacerdotalism.

The Rationalist despises it because it is humbling to the pride of intellect, and assigns to culture a lowly place.

Dead-orthodoxy hates it because it is humbling to the pride of system. Dead-orthodoxy worships *the truth of God* instead of *the God of truth*. The idolatry is not the less abominable in that the idol is so fair. True revival breaks the idol and sets the living God on high.

The ultra-Calvinist objects to revival because Christ is freely offered to sinners. Ultra-Calvinism keeps scowling watch at the gate of mercy, lest sinners, hearing a rumour that the gospel is for every creature, should make too free of entrance. Some people seem to be afraid lest too many sinners should get saved. There is no need to be alarmed; their own views of predestination should keep them calm on that score. In connection with ultra-Calvinism there is usually a certain hyper-subjectivity, a perpetual looking into the heart for evidences instead of looking out to Christ for all. This cramps the liberty, embitters the joy, and crushes the life of faith, so that the believer sits and shudders amidst the arctic snows of everlasting doubts and fears, and gives to the glad tidings the only response of a prolonged wail. In these circumstances a true revival is almost a moral impossibility, and the very elect themselves pine and dwindle. It is a melancholy spectacle to see, what is too common under such teaching, poverty-stricken souls clutching at a treasure which yet they dare not use, and famishing ones invited to look upon a feast which yet they dread to touch. In ancient times the apostle was bound, but the Word of God was free. In these days in certain quarters the Word of God is bound, while the preacher is free, and, jailor-like, keeps watch and ward at the iron gate, permitting the gospel just to peer out at you through the prison bars. We hold the glorious but awful truth of predestination and "election through grace;" but we also remember the

commandment of the Master—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

It has been urged against the revival that it has not converted the sceptics. If it has not, so much the worse for the sceptics. If the Word of God, as spoken by Moses and the prophets, and by Christ and His apostles, does not convert the sceptics, then the sceptics are in a very bad way. A great many unbelieving men, not a few sceptics included, have been converted of late, though, doubtless, the vast majority of infidels remain as they were. But the preaching and miracles of our Lord did not convert the sceptics of His time; nay, not even many of the most intensely religious people, the Pharisees. As it was with Christ, so it has ever been with Christianity. Never even in its palmiest days has the gospel, though it be the power of God unto salvation, converted any one entire class of sinners. The greatest revival is but a rill of living Christianity, and it will rise no higher than its source.

Let us frankly admit that the revival has only touched the fringe of evil. Here and there a tree has been felled, a spot has been cleared, but the great forest remains in all its unbroken extent. Many have been saved, but myriads more live without God and without hope. Yet it is easy to see that the old gospel, which of late has been made the power of God to sinners of every class, and among the rest drunkards, scoffers, Jews, Roman Catholics, sceptics, and formalists, carries in its bosom abounding hope for a perishing world.

One of the dangers to which the recent movement was exposed was its being a little fashionable. When religion enjoys a breath of popularity, it always suffers in its spirit. Better the clogs of contempt, or the bare feet of reproach, or even the stocks of persecution, than the "silver-slippers" of worldly honour. Fifteen years ago Revival came among us meanly-clad, with bare head and bleeding feet, and those who took her in suffered reproach for her sake. This time she came from the

metropolis clothed in high fashion, with many ornaments and troops of friends, and her former companions scarcely recognized her. Now, for one man that will be a martyr for a truly noble but unpopular or unsuccessful cause, you will find a hundred who will readily fall in with a fashionable or successful movement. The very man who cannot, even with his spectacles on, see the Angel Adversity at his own door, will bow to Dame Success, though she is at the further end of the street. There is a danger lest some ministers and others take to playing at revival. There are men mean enough to make a game of anything, provided only it promises to pay. There is a "mixed multitude" always ready to leave Egypt, if only the leaving furnishes opportunity of borrowing jewels from their neighbours.

Another danger arises from the shallowness of the work in a number of cases. Every revival has its weak point; every work in which man takes a part is imperfect. In the recent movement, it must be admitted that to some extent there was a certain slightness or lack of conviction of sin. The work, admirably conducted in many respects, was in some measure weak here: there was too little dealing with conscience. Had the teaching and whole strain of the movement entered more into the domain of conscience, the work, often good as far as it went, would have been more satisfactory. There are many avenues to the human soul, but there is no real awakening, no right sense of God, no healing of the heart's plagues, no establishment of the soul in grace and righteousness, where there is not thorough work in the conscience. It is here, in fact, where much of the preaching of the day fails. Many preachers lack power to handle the conscience, and so fail to bring men face to face with a holy law and a holy cross, or rather with a righteous and holy God in the law and in the cross. Where this is defective in the preaching of the gospel, there is danger lest conversion should be rather in the head, in the feelings, or in the fancy, and consequently not thorough, not real, not permanent and saving.

This was partly the reason why so few of the lowest class of the people were reached directly by the movement. You can more easily teach, impress, and mould persons of some intelligence and religion than those who have little or none of either, because there are so many avenues to the minds of the former; you have in them so many handles and wires, so to say, by which you can communicate the electric thrill of a religious impulse. But if you cannot take hold on conscience with a strong, rude grasp, you will not touch the lower orders of men; you cannot so much as *talk religion* to them. The only religious thing in them is conscience. And, after all, it is the best thing in man; it is the power that lies nearest to God and eternity. And however men may talk about love and all the sweet sentiments, we must still get the whole business of religion and of the soul well bottomed in repentance, in righteousness, in holiness; we must still come back to conscience and to God.

Many praised the calmness of the movement. This pleasing feature indicated a weak point. For while the calmness was partly due to the intelligence of many of the awakened, it was also in measure due to the slightness of convictions. The revival in 1859-60 was ruder, but it was deeper. If it was less measured and tranquil, it was more searching and thorough. Its foundations were laid more in conscience, in conviction of sin, and so far it was purer and stronger. Fifteen years ago we never heard inquirers or converts asking how much of the world and its gaieties they might have along with salvation. Pungent conviction of sin settled that question right quickly. Of late, some professing better things, have betrayed a strong desire to carry their worldly frivolities along with them to heaven. No wonder if some such have already befooled themselves and their profession. Somewhat may be due to defective teaching, for too often, in respect of the world's darling little idols, the trumpet of the watchman gives an uncertain sound. Says the Rev. Judicious

Trimming, "There is Mrs. So-and-so and her daughters, and the Misses Sillydove, and quite a number of other dear young creatures professing godliness. They like an occasional dancing party, and the opera. If I come down on these things, it might discourage them, or give them mortal offence. What shall I say?" Mr. Carnal Policy: "I advise you to say nothing, or if you say anything; just remark that 'it is a difficult question, and one which you cannot presume to settle. It all depends on how you look at it. Everybody must follow his own lights.' Here is a good text for you, 'To the pure all things are pure;' or better, 'Using the world, as not abusing it.' There are plenty of texts: be judicious, be all things to all men." Which counsel, being interpreted, means "Trim!"

There always has been an insane outcry against any manifestation of great earnestness in religion, and there is some danger of one seeking to conciliate the world by joining in the cry. The interests of the soul are the most stupendous in the world. True religion has its seat in the heart, and ere Christianity can enthrone itself there the empire of darkness must be overthrown. It is not, therefore, without violence that the kingdom is taken. Earnestness, intensity, enthusiasm are here, if anywhere, in the highest degree reasonable. In all great spiritual awakenings there must be a conflict of interests, as in most individuals there is a mighty tumult of contending emotions. When the bones are stirring, bone coming to bone, there will ever be a great noise. So it was in the great excitement of Pentecost. And such excitement, wisely guided, is as salutary as it is natural, and instead of hindering ultimately promotes the work of grace. On this score the world has little to say. Its excitements are innumerable, unbounded, extravagant, and unreasonable. An intelligent man of my acquaintance, of cool, philosophic temperament, who had strong objections to emotional excitement in religion, was one day in a state of obvious embarrassment and distraction. Concluding from the

pallor of his countenance, the tremor of his voice, and the wild sadness of his air, that he had sustained some sudden domestic bereavement, I made inquiry with due caution and tenderness. I found, however, he had lost neither wife nor child; his overmastering alarm, his tragic grief, being due simply to a *sudden fall in the price of jute!* In truth, in this matter of excitement, the world make fools of themselves every day. Clearly less excitement about the world, and more concern, even with a little touch of extravagance in it, about the interests of eternity, would be of immense advantage to many. At any rate we do not need to be eternally apologizing to the world for the excessive earnestness of awakened sinners, or warm-hearted Christians. And while we appreciate quietness in the flow of a great religious movement, we must not forget that it is simply impossible to tone down spiritual religion to the world's taste, and it were folly to try.

31.10
If the recent and former awakenings have taught us anything, it is that the one grand remedy for all the evils that afflict the Church of Christ is the power of the Holy Ghost. Languishing, dying churches may be seen everywhere. Some churches die of sheer inanition, of old age; some die of too much wisdom, that is, of carnal policy; and some die of too little, not knowing how at once to conserve truth and purity of worship, and yet adapt themselves to the age. Some die of too much law; and some of too much liberty; some starve on the pinnacles of high respectability, while others languish in the ruts of formality. Some die of too much creed, some of too little; some perish of doctrinal error, and some pine away through theological tight-lacing; some suffer from too much priest, others from too much people; some are fatally sick from an apoplectic fulness of State-connection, others not less fatally from a thin-blooded dissent. In some the caterpillar of worldliness has devoured all greenness, leaving scarce one sign of life; while in others,

is obvious, but not less destructive, the worm of spiritual is gnawing at the root. But the primary cause of death is the grieving of the Spirit of God; and the one remedy is the quickening of the Spirit of life in Christ. It is for decaying churches to seek renewal of health, as Job did it, by scraping the skin with a potsherd. The disease is in the blood; and the only remedy is new life, fresh from the fountain-head, the risen Redeemer. Only when the hand of God rolled back time, and renewed life to king Hezekiah, the plaister of figs serve to aid recovery. But some would use plaister as a substitute for the power of God, and hope to cure death with their figs.

The results of the late awakening have already been referred to in detail. The gain to a living Christianity is considerable. The lessons of the work are many. For instance, greater faith in the personality, office, and grace of the Holy Ghost, and a deeper sense of dependence on Him in all life and work. A new faith in the old gospel for the salvation of sinners, even the most hardened; and for healing all the wounds of humanity, even the deepest. A stronger trust in the efficacy of the simple Word of God for all its noble ends and uses, and an increasing confidence in the power of prayer. A deeper sense of the value and power of Christian union, both in worship and in work. The dignity and privilege of Christian work, and the power of a single eye to see the glory of God in seeking the good of men. More light in the Word, more life in Christ, more love to saints, more for souls, and, best of all, more crowns to be cast at the feet of the Saviour. And that man is little to be envied who does not see and learn anew to admire in this whole movement the sovereignty of Him who is "wonderful in counsel and mighty in working."

Every man in this country will remember with grateful appreciation the services of the two wise-hearted evangelists whose labours

have been used for so much good among us. Not long since royal commissioners were sent across the Atlantic for the purpose of effecting a treaty of amity and peace between the two great English-speaking nations, and this good work they accomplished at a great cost to this country, but to her everlasting honour. Not long afterwards two messengers of peace and good-will left the American shore for this land with a commission from the great King, which heaven has sealed with a thousand blessings. He alone who rules knows whether in His purpose there was any connection between the two events; but it did seem as if we, having sown our "carnal things" to the American people, were now reaping their "spiritual things." Certainly such a law of compensation appears to be recognized in the Word of God. Be that as it may, not the least result of the gigantic and successful labours of the American evangelists will be the drawing into bonds of closer sympathy the Christian people on the opposite shores of the Atlantic. It is clearly the mind of that Spirit, who distributes His gifts to individuals, churches, and nations, severally as He wills, that we should freely give and take, thus learning of one another, and helping one another. And while we can show to our Christian brethren in America a certain caution and thoroughness, a plodding patience and steadiness, in the work of the Lord, we may learn from that quick, ingenious, and versatile people somewhat of their fertility in methods, their skillful adaptation of means, their constant observance of system, and their practicalness of aim; while faith in God underlies all, pervades all, and rises above all.

Divine Providence advances by majestic steps. To us the progress often seems slow; and that is because the chariot of the divine administration is far above the range of mortal vision. Sometimes events hasten, and the strides of providence appear to us to be rapid and immense. This is when the mysterious wheel of the chariot touches the earth, and moves along the plane

of human observation. In a time of spiritual revival we catch a glimpse of the wheel. The comings and goings of Jehovah, in the furtherance of His kingdom on earth, resemble the work of the mysterious days of creation. God appears on the scene; a new phase of the work is inaugurated; His glory is effulgent; it is morning, another day. He withdraws; the work goes on slowly, secretly, silently; it is night. When all is ripe for another forward movement, God appears again upon the scene, and His glorious presence is made manifest in a fresh development of the plan, in a new phase of the work. The evening and the morning constitute another day; for the evening not less than the morning forms part of God's day, since the Divine Worker is working all through the dark hours, though the work is slow, silent, and unseen. So in the kingdom of heaven the Divine Worker comes and goes. There is ever a period when little or no progress is to be seen, so slowly and secretly do the silent processes ripen. Sometimes it seems as if truth and righteousness were going back. Yet, all the time things are moving on.

It is night. The worker has retired, but his plants are growing. Suddenly God reveals Himself in some striking manifestation of grace and truth. There is an overturning, a collapse of much that was old and established, and an outburst of the new. In the blaze of His glory, the seeds of God's purpose germinate and ripen with marvellous rapidity. It is when He appears in His glory that He builds up Zion. Then visibly, palpably, it is morning in the Church. The previous evening, with its slow and silent work of preparation, and the outbursting morning of revivals and ripened fruits, constitute another day. The comings and goings of God make up the sum of the believer's chequered spiritual experience, his evenings and his mornings, his soul's days. In this respect, and in other ways, the parallel existing between the individual member and the body of Christ is complete. But while our minds love to dwell on the brighter aspects

of the picture, let us not forget that even the dark and distressing events of Providence signalize, though we cannot see how, the progress of the kingdom of God. The sound of the tornado that devastates a continent, the roar of the tempest that strews the shores of ocean with a thousand wrecks, the crackling and bellowing of the flames that lay a proud city in ashes, the mutterings of the earthquake that awaken a myriad sleepers as they sink into a living tomb, the crash of battle, the moan of wounded, dying men, the wail of widow and orphan, that mark the fall of some great dynasty and the ruin of some mighty nation—these surely are melancholy and portentous sounds; and yet they are but the echoing tramp of the horses' feet, the whirr of the revolving wheels, as the chariot of the Almighty King rolls along the highway of time towards its predestined goal of triumph in eternity.



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